WHY I KISSED JACK DEMPSEY

MIDNIGHT

Sept. 30, 1922

A Macfadden Publication

10¢

A complete, thrilling one act play in this Issue

Women – at Midnight – in New York

Murder in the Name of the Law!
See page 8

Thrills! Thrills! Thrills!

MIDNIGHT THRILLS are pouring into this office with every mail. From all over the country they come—east, west, south and north. Thrills! Oh, boy! You ought to read them! *You* must have a midnight thrill to send in. Don't delay, as the time is getting short—the contest closes at MIDNIGHT, October 14th, 1922.

Don't forget! There are EIGHTEEN PRIZES! Your chance is as good as anybody else's. Send in your thrill at once. Perhaps YOU will win the first prize of two hundred and fifty dollars.

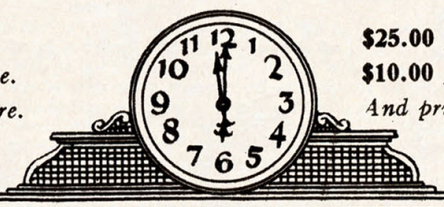
On page 22 of this issue of MIDNIGHT we are printing a few of those entries that we consider really thrilling. There are plenty of others just as thrilling, so we don't mean that those we print will win a prize necessarily.

If you have a real thriller—SEND IT IN!

And remember—NO MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED WORDS.

Other details and conditions of the contest appear below.

$250.00 *for the best adventure.*
$100.00 *for the next best adventure.*
$ 50.00 *for the third best adventure.*



$25.00 *for the fourth best adventure.*
$10.00 *for the fifth best adventure.*
And prizes of **$5.00** *each for the* **13** *next best adventures.*

This competition is open to everyone, except employees of MIDNIGHT and their families.

In the event of a tie for any of the prizes, each tying contestant will receive the full amount of the prize tied for.

Literary excellence will not be a factor. Only the merit of the adventure from the standpoint of its being thrilling is all that counts.

The prize winning adventures will all be published in MIDNIGHT, and those we publish which do not win prizes, will be paid for at our regular rates for stories.

You may send in as many stories as you like, providing each covers a different adventure.

The contest begins at once and will close on October 14th, 1922. The winners will be announced in the November 11th issue of MIDNIGHT.

Address your stories, or any questions about the contest, to the THRILL EDITOR, MIDNIGHT, 119 West 40th Street, New York City.

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VOLUME 1
NUMBER 7

Out of the Devil's Clutches

by Bernarr Macfadden

THE road to wreck and ruin is easy to travel.

You do not need a self-starter. What you need is a "stopper."

And those who travel this road—for moments now and then they are sensible. They see the "handwriting on the wall." They have a vision of what is in store for them.

When they gaze at their bedraggled selves, these questions frequently scourge their consciousness with startling emphasis:

CAN I COME BACK AGAIN? IS THERE HOPE FOR ME?

Can I be the man I once was? Am I tainted for life?

Will rest and peace come to me only in the cemetery?

At times these queries cannot be evaded. They burn into the very soul of these poor "has-beens."

And when they are asked with sufficient frequency, this answer should come back:

"While there is life, there is hope."

With a grain of determination the possibilities are infinite. From a minute seed a great tree grows, and whether or not there is hope for you depends upon the "you" within you.

Have you got enough manhood, character and will-power to turn out the old life—"bag and baggage?"

And then start life again with a clean slate!

Many years ago you were doubtless a wholesome, healthy boy. Your Mother smiled upon you. You were the pride of her heart. What were your habits of life when you were vital and vigorous and perhaps a good-looking youth?

You will doubtless reply—"outdoor games, wholesome foods, much hard muscular work. Early to bed, early to rise," etc., etc.

All these factors had something to do with your superior condition as a splendid-looking boy.

And regardless of your age, if you expect to "come back" again, put yourself under similar influences.

Find some hard muscular work and "go to it" with the best there is left within you. You may be stiff and sore for days, but do not flinch. Grit your teeth and stick to it. Wholesome recreation, outdoor life, camping—all these are good for you. Anything that puts you in touch with nature can be recommended.

Regular meals, with no alcoholic drinks or eating between meals are good when you can get them.

These are the fundamental requirements essential to the "coming back" process.

Get away from the old life of dissipation that leads you direct to the devil and damnation. Make a fight for your own place where you can hold your head up and look the world in the face, for when you are clean within and clean without you are ready for any emergency.

This is a "coming back" process that anyone can try. All you need is will-power, "stick-to-it-iveness," and a dominating desire to get back into the road that leads to the life of achievement.

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Who fiddles while

Is New York the World's

New York leaves Sodom and Gemorrah at the post in the Wickedness Handicap

"There is liquor on every table; there is deep-throated mirth, and the shrill laughter of careless women. We are swift with the passionate rhythm of the insane symphony of Jazz!"

"IS New York more wicked than ancient Rome?" a man asked me over the dinner table the other day. He was an out-lander, doing the metropolis for the first time. On a dollar-a-ride bus he had gaped at Chinatown and Greenwich Village. Dark tales had come to his ears of high carouse and stealthy deeds in those famous frauds of literature.

"My friend," I said to him, "you make me remember a phrase from the conversation on Liars and Lying of Philocles and Tychiades, as reported by Lucian. 'Sight-seers' declared Philocles, 'do not want the truth—they would not take it as a gift!' And you, my friend," I concluded, smiling as amiably as I could, "are a sight-seer!"

"No!" he protested earnestly. "I do want the truth."

"You ask me if New York is more wicked than ancient Rome?

"I answer you that it is! But I will go farther than that, and assert that all America is equally guilty with New York; that Broadway is the pattern for your Main Street, and that our proud republic is morally more infamous than ancient Rome, than proud Nineveh, than all the gaudy bacchanalia that were staged behind the hundred brazen gates of Babylon!"

"Why, that is unpatriotic!" he protested.

"Would you call it pro-Roman, maybe?" I asked him.

"And besides," he complained, "look at the work of the reform elements. Look at the Anti-Saloon League—they got us Prohibition, praise God!"

What I then told my guileless friend over our coffee and cigars is what, in substance, I am repeating here. I told him what had been hatched, years ago, at Broadway and Forty-second Street—a dancing buzzard that had spread its scarlet wings across the map of the United States. When he pressed me, I contrasted the condition of Ancient Rome to that of modern America as I know it to be. When he argued with me that the world was being mopped up—that the red lights were out, and solicitation a blasted business, I replied with the facts that I shall present here, the facts that demonstrate the impurity and impudicity that flourish in our cities like the poisonous upas tree; I showed him that seduction and defilement and violation were nightly matters of boasting among the toss-pots and carousers in our cafes—I let him see, not only the wet floor, but the streaming spigot!

I shall here confine myself to a description of what New York is like beneath the surface, reminding the reader only that our entire national life is tinged with the reflected color of the metropolis. That is true of all lands and climes, and it was true of the ancient Roman Empire. The city that is set on seven hills was the model for all the surrounding towns and villages and its influence spread through all those roads that led to it from the uttermost ends of the explored earth.

IF New York is as wicked as I conceive it, then the canker is eating not only the rocky island of Manhattan, but all the states which still regard themselves as free!

Regardless of what the reformers say, I know that from midnight on to six o'clock in the morning, there are ribald entertainments in New York, including drinking bouts that would have shamed the stableman of Nero, and disrobing dances that would have brought the blush to the painted cheeks of Salome, and that these disreputable exhibitions are patronized not only by the cheap roustabouts, not only by the Broadway rake-hells, libertines and debauchees, but occasionally by some of the nicest people in town!

Times Square is a colorful, surging whirlpool of people, struggling to elude the wheels of honking,

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New York Burns?

wickest city in the History

Where is the grandeur that was Rome? No, calm yourself—not Rome, N. Y. We mean, Rome, Italy. Well, Rome's grandeur is in the same place where New York will be if—but read the story and shiver righteously

snorting flocks of automobiles. It is the best dressed, or at least the most expensively dressed crowd in the world. Never mind that it is five-thirty o'clock in the afternoon, and that many of the girls we see are stenographers, bookkeepers, "saleswomen," manicurists—in a word, working girls. They are gowned like the duchesses in the stories they have been reading. Around their necks are milky pearls—more often real than not; on their slim fingers are diamonds and rubies; they are wrapped in satins, and silks and sables; their undergarments are of downiest, gauziest texture; their stockings are costly silk; from their carefully concealed ears depend glittering gems—they are walking bank accounts! That is the modest uniform they wear to work.

In the exciting press of people there is also talk of gambling. A great many of those who have not been working have been to bridge parties where sums are won and lost that would stagger callous old poker hounds. In the offices the wage-slaves have not been too busy slaving to enjoy a quiet game of "put and take" or "craps." "Put and take" for a while threatened to put the dice manufacturers out of business, but its charm was only transient, and today the ivories are as popular as ever—and they are as often shaken in the rosy hands of young girls as they are in the dusky paws of negro tramps!

An illustration of this wide interest in gambling and chance, which reaches into margin risks and horse racing, came to me one evening at the play. I occupied a box at a prominent theater. Two flappers had seats in the box. They did not look to be more than seventeen years old, but they were rouged like women of the chorus, with false lashes and all the other war-garb of the vamps. Their young hair was still sticky from a recent daubing in yellow dye. Immediately following the first act, the two of them squatted on the floor, with the chair between them, and began spinning a "Put and Take" top on the seat, at twenty-five cents a point. Five dollars changed from the blue-eyed flapper to the brown before the curtain rose on the second act!

"Good God!" I heard the unlucky blue-eyed one exclaim, "You've put me completely horse de come-back!"

NOW let us see what kind of a dinner they eat when they get home. Food and morals are inextricably bound up, though few people seem to realize it. Nothing is more wicked, and nothing leads to more wickedness, than improper eating. The trouble with our tables today is that all the old-fashioned cooks are dead, and their recipes are being exploited by commercial manufacturers. Home cooking, is becoming a lost art. We spread out for dinner canned soups, canned fish, canned meats, canned vegetables; we buy a lot of preserved foods from the delicatessen shops—because many wives and mothers of today are too lazy to do what their mothers did and cook a decent meal.

Pause for just a moment and take a long look backward across the dead centuries to a place where later we shall look longer—to the banquet halls of Nero. We thrill with disgust at some of the descriptions we read of the feasts that were staged there. In the histories we read that they thrust ivory sticks down their throats, after their stomachs were filled up, and having thus emptied their first courses, they would pass on to fresh viands!

But nowhere in ancient history do you read of the stomach pump. That is a modern invention. Perhaps the ancients did make hogs of themselves. But if they had allowed the food to remain there, it probably would have been digested—because Nero hired good cooks and if guests had a pain in the stomach, off came the head of the cook. If some of the delicatessen shopkeepers of New York worked for Nero, there would be wholesale executions. At least the Romans had well-cooked, unpolluted foods. They did not swallow the camouflaged poison of the profiteers, and indigestion was not a Roman ailment.

Have you had your daily righteousness yet? Read this story and feel holy—when you see how really good you are in comparison with the dwellers along The Great Blight Way and points adjacent

THE increase of cheap restaurants, the growing indisposition of many American women to cook really edible meals, their ever-developing reliance upon prepared foods sold over the counter, is weakening not only the American stomach, but is helping women to be lazier than ever. A certain class of American women are getting lazier every year. Since they have gone into business—so many of them are employed before marriage—they look with distaste on household duties. They want to be dressed up all the time. Cooking is a dirty bore. So every day the city welcomes more delicatessen shops and restaurants.

This is symptomatic. The time that some women used to spend in cooking their husband's meals they use now for hootch parties, bridge fights, and dancing, not to mention less printable amusements!

We shall assume that that portion of the crowd of which I speak—the pleasure-mad portion—got home and gulped down the delicatessen dinner. There is no doubt of what will happen next. They are going to the show—and we shall be able to contrast what they see, and how they see it, with what went on in the places of amusement in Ancient Rome—the Circus Maximus, for example, where spectacles were staged under the ægis of the Emperors Claudius, Augustus, Nero, Domitian Trajan, Tiberius and even the unspeakable Caligula, or perhaps in the stone theater of Pompeii!

If it happens to be a musical comedy that the young ladies will take in this evening—after their young men may have been made to walk the plank by the piratical ticket agencies which compete with the legitimate ones—you may be sure that Nero will be sorry he died so soon. Beside some of the modern musical frivolities of the Broadway stage, with their seductive dances, unclad women, dirty jests, the old and terrible burlesque of our boyhood, against which every nice young man was warned, appears like a Sunday school Christmas festival.

Not for any price could one have induced Rose Sydell and her fat London Belles to put on what some of our modern producers purvey, under the glittering mask of art. Ben Welch was a deacon, Al Reeves was an evangelist, Billy Watson's Beef Trust was a touring Chautauqua, beside the pornographic displays offered in some shows to be seen on Broadway.

As for the drama—shades of Ristori, Salvini, Bernhardt! What our young lady friends may witness tonight would put Sappho to the blush. I can well remember how, years ago, respectable people dropped their voices to a whisper when they discussed the "*Black Crook*." As for such melodramas as "When London Sleeps" or "The Searchlights of a Great City," no one dared drag them into the parlor.

Yet, by our new standards, those old plays were as antiseptic as a strawberry feast on the church lawn. Klint and Gazzolo, who sent out so many of the old thrillers, were moral teachers compared to some of our modern managers. For virtue always triumphed in *On the Bridge at Midnight*, or *Chinatown Charlie*, or *Ruled Off the Turf*, or *Bertha, the Sewing Machine Girl*, or even *Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model*, and *Convict* 999.

These were supposed to be the horrible examples of those days, yet such were the rigid moral requirements of the producers that vice was always crushed under the heel of innocence, and the pure heroine fell, just before the last curtain, unviolated, into the arms of the hero.

But today!

I MIGHT fill these pages with examples of obscene lines and business practiced nightly on the New York stages. Nothing is too intimate, too bold, or too vulgar to be emblazoned behind the footlights.

But all these matters are preparatory. I have mentioned them here, and at length, to show the atmosphere which the people of New York breathe. Only because of that atmosphere, which successfully gases out the efforts of the neighborhood churches, and mocks and flaunts in the faces of the hired reformers, can such things as exist in the late night life be possible. The monstrosities I shall presently describe are not an isolated phase of the city's activities. They exist because the people are what they are; their ideals are what they are; it is the dead white flower of the tree of extravagance.

When all the curtains are down, and the orchestra

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players have packed up their instruments and left the theatres, then a new play begins—the frolic of the roofs, the gardens, the cabarets and the dining-rooms. The more respectable after-theater parties may linger in the hotels over sandwiches until well after midnight, dancing and chatting. But the minutes have skipped away—it is two o'clock in the morning.

Now let us see what is happening!

Here, in an obscure side street off of Broadway, is a modest entrance, which one would not notice particularly, except that up and down the curb are lined expensive automobiles. Women wrapped in ermine or chinchilla, men in huge furs, are passing rapidly through that unostentatious doorway. Their laughter is loud and boisterous, as if they have come from a gay place to this, which is to be the climax of their fun.

We follow them. We go through that modest doorway, mount a stairs, and find ourselves in a small lobby, the walls of which are draped in florid satin. Before the entrance to the inner temple of carouse stands an imposing menial who bars our path.

He wants to know if we have a reservation.

Fortunately, we carry the assured air of bored insouciance which is the master key. Awed by our prepossession, the lackey stands respectfully aside. We pass in.

The place is thronged. Around the tables are grouped a large and animated crowd of wonderfully dressed people. Being metropolitan, being sophisticated, we pick out faces here and there. This is no rendezvous for tin-horn gamblers and their women alone. Respectable people in town are also here. The "Captain" of the waiters recognizes us, bows, and sees that we get a table to ourselves where we can look on comfortably.

There is liquor on every table; there is deep-throated, mountainous mirth, and the shrill laughter of careless women. The air is thick with the fumes of smoking Havana and the blended tobaccos of the East and the West. We entered during a lull—now with a rending crash the orchestra lets loose.

We are swept with the passionate rhythm of the insane symphony of Jazz!

Look at the floor!

Everyone is dancing, with fervor, with abandon, with eyes glittering and eager pressures, and now and then a guilty laugh! Gentlemen at the tables are proudly producing their silver hip flasks—it is unfashionable not to bulge in the proper place these days. The waiters are bringing food, but not in abundance. This crowd is here to drink and dance.

Somewhere a clock strikes three golden notes. Simulataneously a green light floods the room. The exhibition dance will now begin!

The orchestra is whining a low, enticing melody, and now through the curtains emerge four hula girls. They are very young, they are exceedingly well formed, and their clothing is even less than an excuse. They spray showers of perfume on the guests.

They writhe, writhe, writhe, in wrigglings and wigglings, and twistings and turnings, in attitudes and postures which, while they may lack grace, or beauty, or even charm, yet are in rhythm with the chanting of the music. Amid a clatter of applause, they bow toward the curtains, through which at last emerges the premiere danseuse.

She could turn a *Streets of Cairo* coryphee green with envy. She creeps, she glides, she sways, she trembles, she quivers, she darts, and whirls, and stands motionless allowing her muscles to keep up the rhythm of the music. Close to the edge of the tables she comes, casting her languorous arms in mock entreaty at bald-headed bankers, and tittering legislators. Her bare flesh is within touch of their flabby fingers, and she delights in eluding their porkish fondlings. When she has toyed with them long enough, she darts back to the center, and concludes her performance.

Then she vanishes through the curtains after her coryphants, and the night's performance is over.

"HOW I BEGGED A FORTUNE," in next week's MIDNIGHT, will open your eyes to the possibilities of living without soiling your lily-white hands with labor.

In Rome a man could get all he wanted to drink with the full protection of the law. Here we have Prohibition. But we still have the booze, and while Rome did enjoy respect for her laws and edicts and decrees, in New York many other laws are falling into disrepute because of Prohibition. Outfits for making home brew are displayed boldly in the shop windows, and some merchants will give you full instructions how to manufacture anything from liquor to lysol. And some of the home brew they offer you, in the homes of your friends, would eat the stomach lining off of a mummy.

You may recall the remark made by the Old Soak, that delightful friend of Don Marquis. Speaking of "Home Brew" he said that a friend of his, who had made some, owned a parrot. It was a gentleman parrot, of untarnished reputation. After the owner had brewed his beer, he grew cautious, and decided to try it out on the parrot. If the beer didn't kill the parrot, then the owner would take a chance on trying it himself. When the parrot swallowed the beer, he rolled his eyes, stood speechless for a moment, and then, according to the Old Soak, went off in a corner of his cage—and laid an egg!

Some of the home brew would make a man do almost anything! And making it has become a national pastime.

Do you imagine that ancient Rome sang more ribald songs than you will find on many a piano, if you take the trouble to look at the latest "hits"? Nero, in his most drunken moments, couldn't have improved on the imagination of the composer of such a gem as "If I like it, I'm going to do it—and I like it!" which is a modest sample of our song favorites today!

Do you think that the Roman matrons, who were renowned for their fortitude and their courage, ever indulged in the swearing that now seems to be as much a prerogative of some women as the vote? Some women seem obsessed with the desire to imitate men—to swear, to smoke, to gamble, to raise the evangelical hell!

Do you think the Roman wives and mothers would neglect their households, would leave the beds unsheeted, the floors unswept, the dishes unwashed, the dinner unprepared, while they gadded out on window-shopping tours, or to card parties, or to matinees, or to afternoon dances, where they ogled with lounge lizards, exchanged confidences about the latest scandals, and joined in mutual laughter at their husbands?

Or do you think that the Roman men would have stood for such performances five minutes?

WHAT is the worse that is charged against Nero? I mention Nero because he is still a popular symbol for all that was wicked before and after him in the Empire. Admitting that Nero was a dissolute wretch, consorting with a licentious murderess called Poppea, let us estimate the magnitude of his depravity.

We know that in the beautiful "House of Gold" which he built, after the fire which Suetonius accused him of starting, they made merry with wine and women and what passed for singing. There, Otho the profligate dandy, formally gave his wife to Nero for one night. That is degeneracy—but today we have worse than that. We have a new institution called the "week-end" which lasts from Friday to Monday! Nero was the emperor, and he could borrow any wife he liked. If the husband didn't agree, he could drink the hemlock. But our week-end affairs are arranged by the interested parties themselves—without even consulting the husband!

Again, on one sottish night in the same House of Gold, Sporus, the poor eunuch, and Pythagoras, the freedman, both were degraded by the Roman prince. These memories of infamy bad as they are, are duplicated and surpassed by the unspeakable debaucheries that occur in New York, and all over the country, notably in Los Angeles, where the motion picture colony has recently come into the limelight.

Reverting to Nero and his loutish attempts at making a record in wickedness, let us not forget that he tied prisoners to stakes, smeared them with tar and set them on fire, to light up his terraces! That is wickedness with imagination. But let us not forget that down in Georgia, while they still use the emperor's tar on the negroes they also add coal oil, which burns faster and gives a bloodier glow than ever illuminated Nero's gardens. In the matter of brutality and cruelty, our lynching records will out-rival all that history reports of Nero, the Christians and the lions!

We complain of our national ills—high prices, low production, unemployment. There is work for every one, on the farms! The trouble is no one wants to work on the farms. They want to play in the towns. Too many of the farmer boys are in the cities sowing wild oats, while the fields back home are unploughed!

I charge that New York *is* more wicked than any other city in the history of the world!

I know there are good women left in America,—millions of them. But year after year the other kind grow bolder. Year after year they show more of their persons—new fashions are constantly being invented to bare tempting white morsels of their breasts, sinking their gowns in the back to the base of the spinal column, raising the skirts to the knees. Year after year their modesty lessens, their extravagance increases, their detestation for the duties of wife and mother grows, their support of birth control becomes more eager, their manipulation of the sex lure more intelligent.

Woman has come triumphantly to the throne! Woman is ruling the world! And woman—as is usually the case when she gets authority, has lost her head!

WE lack a spiritual balance, and what we need is a reassertion of parental authority. There is where the spigot is turned on! There is where the reforms should begin. We don't need new laws—we need a few real fathers, a few old-fashioned spankings, and more of home, sweet home in our national life.

We are in danger of becoming a nation of gadders, seeking our amusements in the streets, in the theaters, the dance halls, the gaming galleries.

Let us get back to the hearth-side! Let us build our national strength by the fireplace, with the family reviving the loving compansionship that was so precious a feature of our national life when I was a boy.

Home, sweet home, will cure America of all its rottenness—without any constitutional amendments to assist it, without any well-paid reformers to show us how!

"Who's Looney Now?"

How do you know you are sane? This extraordinary revelation is in next week's MIDNIGHT

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What a hotel switchboard girl knows about men

This story is one of the most interesting we have printed yet. Don't ask for the name of the author--she is playing safe.

WIVES: Don't read this article if your husband spends much time out of town and if your heart is weak! Let well enough alone

BETWEEN the hours of eleven p. m. and seven a. m., I control the switchboard key to conversation at the Hotel Hogarth. It's an easy shift: thirty dollars a week, nothing to be bored at, but not so much opportunity as on a day shift to meet people who come from the nice families

Up to eleven o'clock there are two girls on the board. After that I handle the job alone.

It used to be that the peak of the load came between eleven and two and it took three girls to wait on all the customers who wanted supper reservations at the cabarets—a quart of Scotch and a bottle of seltzer—a Black and White taxi (that was before yellow taxies for jaundiced peop'e were invented)—a quart of Scotch, three limes and two quarts of seltzer—the captain at the Astor Roof—the management—a quart of Rye, half a dozen bottles of ginger ale and six lemons—the doorman at the stage entrance somewhere—gin and orange juice—the porter—asperin—Chicago, Kansas City, Jersey City, Garden City—a pint of Rye and the morning paper—supper for two in room 411—the house detective, police headquarters, the medical examiner, the morgue—the time—the time the girls would be off duty—towels—a Black and White taxi—a pint of Rye and two whiskey glasses.

I couldn't estimate the relative number of whiskey calls and I almost forgot the cracked ice. The bar would have won out in a popular voting contest with the taxi stand a close second. Of course there was an eleven o'clock rush of calls for the ticket speculators and a last minute scramble for tables at the midnight shows. All the time we were putting people to bed. I mean we were handling the calls of those who wanted the lobster sponged off their vests, wanted to leave calls for the morning, and so forth.

YOU understand that that was in the days before Volstead. One girl can take care of all the lights that flash on the board in these days between eleven p. m. and seven a. m. and can easily read a book a night or a magazine from cover to cover. I get my thrills vicariously instead of precariously, if you get me; and it isn't so hard on my diplomacy trying to keep from giving people a tough answer fifteen-sixteenths of the time.

Do you remember the guy in the musical comedy who turned the contents of the ink bottle on the page of the hotel register when he saw his wife coming into the lobby? That happened right in this hotel. He couldn't think on his feet and I told him what to do. All I got was a dollar tip. I could have sold the idea to the playright for twenty-five dollars, only somebody stole my stuff, and I didn't know anything about it until I saw the show. That's just a sample. Things like that still happen, but not so often.

In these times the night is divided into two acts: Act I. Lobby of the Hotel Hogarth. Time: Before Midnight. Act II. Same as act I. After Midnight. The only difference in the action is that before midnight the guests are yawning and after midnight they're snoring.

At eleven o'clock, while the Elks in the lodgeroom at Jasper, Indiana, or Bayonne, New Jersey, are standing, I slip into Bertha's seat at the switchboard and put on the bridle. Bertha and Frances, who handle the board from three to eleven P. M., make a few deft passes with their powder wafers and go home to bed. It used to be that they went somewhere to dance three or four nights out of seven.

John, the Bootlegger, is generally in the lobby. About that time he stops worrying the butt of a cigar and goes off to bed. John lives here, but he does most of his business in the office buildings and the other hotels.

(*Continued on page* 10)

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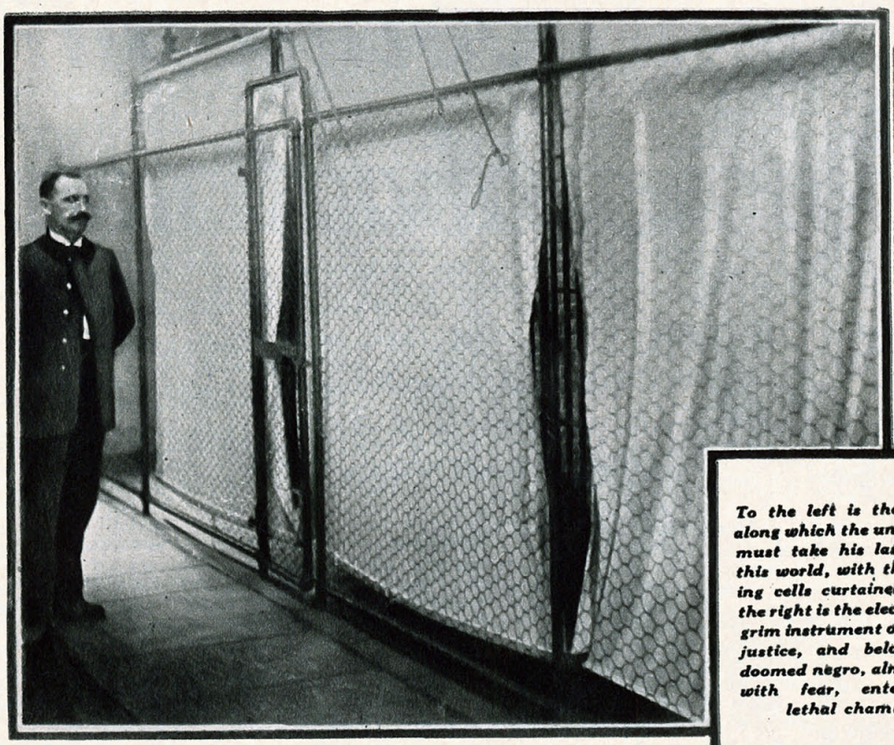
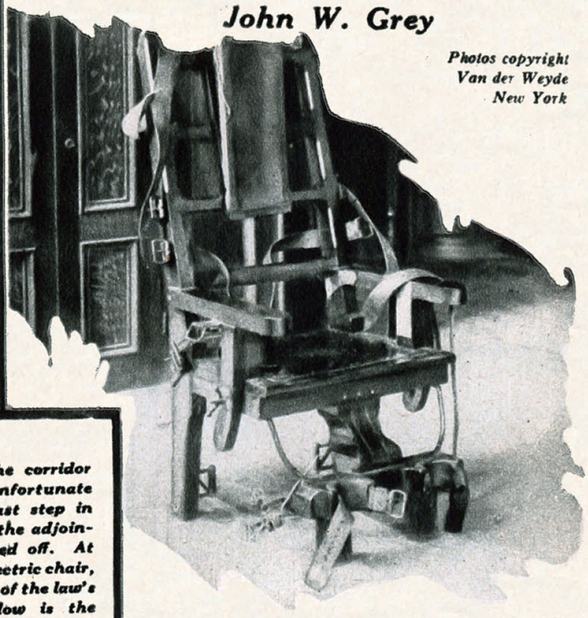
Murder in the

By John W. Grey





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To the left is the corridor along which the unfortunate must take his last step in this world, with the adjoining cells curtained off. At the right is the electric chair, grim instrument of the law's justice, and below is the doomed negro, almost white with fear, entering the lethal chamber

WHEN I entered the execution chamber away off in the corner of the yard of Old Sing Sing prison to witness the electrocution of two murderers, Luther Boddy and Herbert V. Smith, my mind automatically reverted to the Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." And then when I had taken my seat on one of the long, wooden benches that was provided for the witnesses and my eyes rested upon the electric chair, the footstool of bloody human justice, I had a vision of Jesus the Christ nailed to the cross. The Christ, I had been taught, who had died that all sinners might be saved!

My brain was in a whirl. I was trying to reconcile the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," with the monstrous spectacle that was about to be unfolded, a spectacle that is almost beyond any possibility of expression, or description, in words. There before my eyes was the prayer chair of man's vengeance upon man; its staunch looking legs fastened to the floor with teeth and claws of steel. There was the chair that bites into the marrow of men with fangs of fire, that tears the life out of its victims and shocks their sightless souls across the barrier into eternity! Right there before my eyes was the utensil of death that had blasted the lives out of over two hundred human beings!

I was in a stupor and to tell you the truth I don't know how long I sat there looking at this instrument of death before I heard the words, "*Bring in Boddy.*" Those three words woke me up. A big, burly keeper tip-toed over to the big white door that separated the execution chamber from the cells of the doomed to carry out the instructions that he had just received. He tip-toed over to that big white door just as one would tip-toe into the room of a sick person. Noiselessly he turned the key in the lock and noiselessly he pulled the door open. One would have thought that he was going with a message of cheer instead of a message of death. With a stealthy, cat-like tread he passed through the door into the hallway beyond and was lost to my sight.

Another keeper pushed the door to after him and stood there looking through the crack and as he looked he held his right hand on his hip pocket. Presently he opened it just a little, and then he opened it a little more, all the time his left foot was propped up against the bottom of the door and all the time that right hand never left his hip.

THE witnesses on the benches all around me moved nervously in their seats, stretched their necks and whispered into the ears of their neighbors. The atmosphere of the den of horrors was heavy with suspense. Everybody stopped whispering, everybody remained perfectly still; it seemed to me that everybody had stopped breathing; a death-like silence prevailed, you could have heard a pin drop, and I then thought how unnecessary was the sign "Silence" that hung over the door that lead into the autopsy room where the physicians were cleaning and sharpening their scalpels and the rest of their dissecting paraphernalia.

Presently I heard the jingle of keys and then a door clanked open. And then I heard the tell-tale of shuffling feet. These things told me that the procession of death had started. The man at the door opened it up a little more as he peered through and the right hand still rested upon the hip.

Suddenly "Goodbye boys," came to my ears and I knew that Boddy was delivering his valedictory to his associates in the death house and then almost before his words had died I heard the reply shouted by twenty-five other killers of men and pilgrims to the chair, "Goodbye Boddy." For a moment there was the same death like silence again. The keepers in the execution chamber stood there rigid as statues, their eyes closed to slits, hiding any throttled pity that might have been in their hearts.

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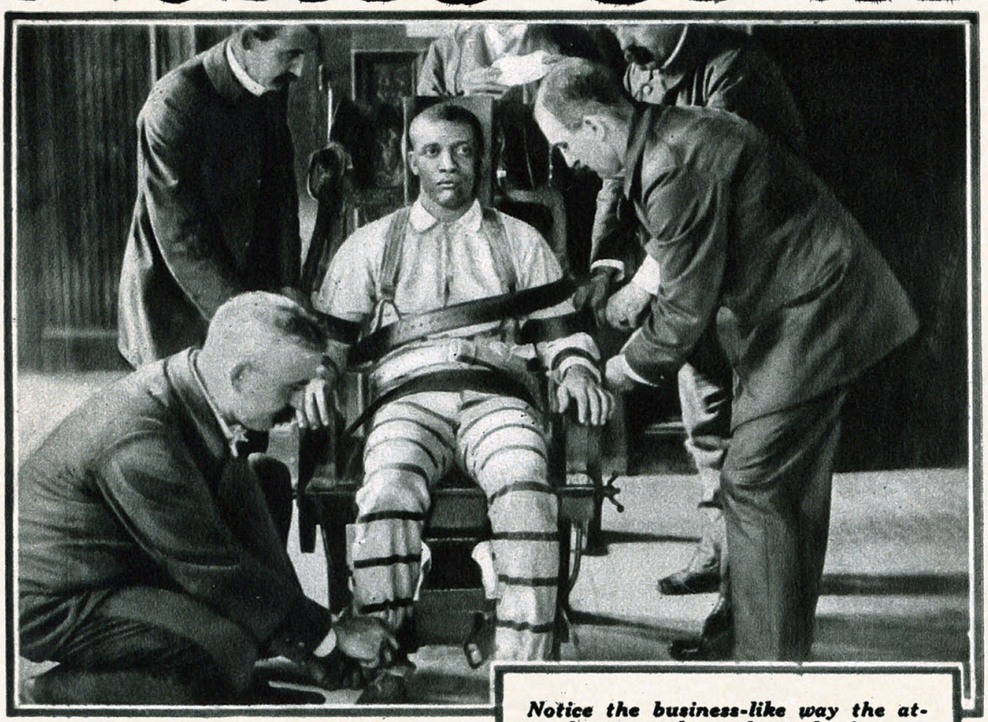
Name of the Law!



Notice the business-like way the attendants go about the task of strapping the convicted man into the chair. It comes of long practice—over two hundred souls having been sent reeling into the hereafter in this sinister footstool of the law

This grim story of the execution of Luther Boddy may be distasteful to super-sensitive people, but the editors of MIDNIGHT feel that the subject is important enough to warrant an open discussion; and the best way to start discussion is by giving a frank, graphic and truthful picture of conditions exactly as they exist.

The silence was punctuated with a wild, weird, blood curdling scream of "Oh God Almighty save me, save me. I don't want to die, I don't want to die!" from one of the inmates of the death house.

MY eyes were riveted on the door through which Boddy must soon enter. The eyes of everybody in that chamber of death were riveted on that big white door, especially the eyes of the keepers, who watched it like a cat watches a rat. Suddenly the young negro mounted the top step. He hesitated for the fractional part of a second. The big, burly keeper who had him by the left arm steered him over to the chair. I could see his body shiver as he slowly bent and sat down. He acted as if he were dog tired, worn out and completely exhausted. He acted like a man who didn't know what he was doing and if you want my opinion he DIDN'T know what he was doing!

The keepers, the seneschals of execution, then began to strap him into the chair of death. The next morning the newspapers said that he smiled while this was being done, that he went to his death with an air of bravado, with utter indifference, with the stoicism of a martyr of old. Ah! God! I'll never forget the expression on his face if I live to be a million! I was directly in front of him not over fifteen feet away where I was able to observe every emotion that registered itself upon his features, and I want to tell you that there was no semblance of a smile, no indication of stoicism or indifference to his fate. It was the face of a human being who was dumb with terror, stupid with fright, paralyzed with thoughts of the grim spectre death. It was ashen!

His brows contracted. He rolled his tongue from one side of his mouth to the other. There was a wild, woe begone, far away, look in his eyes. It was the face of a man who realized that he had reached the last ditch and had but a few minutes to live at the most!

The minister stood to the left of the chair monotoning the last requiem from the gospel of Saint Luke which in part was: "To give light to them that sit in the darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the ways of peace." Here was the religion of Christ in the midst of philistinism, in the atmosphere of Moses. Here were men, the delegated representatives of Society preparing to kill a human being like themselves because he had killed other human beings. They were going to kill him because the law said that he should be killed, because the law said that that was the only way that he could atone for his crime and then my mind reverted again to the Fifth Commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Almost simultaneously I thought of the old Mosaic law of "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life." Right then and there I concluded that the gospel of Christ was out of place and I wondered if the minister realized that it was. It was out of place for the reason that the thing that these men were preparing to do was a positive, an absolute denial of everything that Christ taught and died for. "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord."

I BEGAN to regret that I had come to look at these unfortunate men die. I wanted to get out of the murderous atmosphere. I started to get up and leave, and then it occurred to me that I had a duty to perform, that I had been sent there to write the story of this unspeakable tragedy, write it as it had never been written before so that the world would know the truth and thus, possibly, do my share towards putting an end to this barbarism of Society killing people under the untenable and absolutely irreconcilable contention that it acts as a deterrent to others.

While I sat there thinking these things the keepers were going on with their work of strapping Boddy in the chair. The electrodes were now tight

(*Continued on page 29*)

The last, tense moment just before the signal is given that is to send the convicted murderer instantaneously into eternity

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The Hotel Switchboard Girl

(*Continued from Page 7*)

At eleven the people begin straggling in from the shows. Some of them sit around the lobby a while and then go to bed. A few start out again. They are the out-of-town salesmen, buyers, honeymooners and personally conducted tourists who keep the cover charge and the supper check from dying out altogether.

Speaking of buyers, there was one here from Chicago last week. He was one of the kind who spends four hours a week in a barber's chair, makes love to the manicurists, the girls at the desk and the magazine and cigar stand, the telephone operators, the waitresses and the floor girls. This one certainly plunged heavily on phone calls. Every night at eleven he put in a call for Chicago and at the same time instructed me to put in a call for Evanston, Illinois, at eleven-thirty. Sometime between eleven-thirty and one I would get his Chicago party on the wire, and he would talk for three minutes to a girl named Doris who called him Billy and wanted to know when he would be home. A little later he would get the call through to Evanston and receive a greeting from a female with a shrewish voice. It was his wife, and he tried to get rid of her as quickly as possible, but she insisted on having a tabloid report in three minutes of his movements during the day. I think she charted everything. He used to say to Doris: "Well, I've got to give the wife her bedtime story now."

One night Doris was particularly insistent about his getting back to Chicago. Her gang was going to have a party the following Monday and it wouldn't be any kind of party for her if he were not there. Billy agreed to finish up his business in a hurry and get back.

About that time the Evanston call came through, earlier than usual. The truth is it didn't come all the way through. Somebody fumbled the ball in the Chicago exchange and Billy's wife came in on a busy wire. She recognized his voice and got the drift of the conversation and then she broke through the interference, so to speak, and nailed the runner. She told William that she was having a party Monday night and it wouldn't be a success if he were not there. She intimated that there would be Roman candles and salvos of crockery.

It looked like Billy was going to be thrown back for a loss, but he kept his feet.

"Who do you think you're talking to?" he bellowed. "Get off the line, you old hag. You're on a busy wire." Then he went right on talking to Doris and told her that he would leave New York Saturday on the Twentieth Century and see her Sunday evening.

TEN minutes later he was talking to his wife and explaining that she must be mistaken. He had just got out of bed to answer her call. He had no intention of leaving Saturday and was so busy that he couldn't possibly leave before the following Wednesday or Thursday and that he would telegraph her when he started. She wasn't by any means convinced and she wanted to know who Doris was. He said that he didn't know any Doris and that he wasn't going to stand like a fool in his pajamas all night and listen to her silly fears.

After she was gone, he called the Western Union and dictated a night letter to Doris, saying that he wouldn't dare leave before Wednesday because he would have to put a call through to his wife every night to carry out his bluff.

Then he got John the Bootlegger out of bed and bought a shot of hootch to quiet his nerves.

Once in a while I handle a call that gives me the shimmies. There was a man up in room 320 who called up the morgue four nights in succession. He wanted to know if a girl had been brought in whom he described as being about twenty-six years old, about five feet four, slender, very attractive, with red hair and blue eyes, and wearing a black evening frock with an orange sash, black silk stockings and black satin pumps.

It seems that the girl had rushed out of his apartment at three o'clock in the morning of the day before he first reported her disappearance. She had left declaring that he would never see her again. His apartment was on Lexington Avenue and he hadn't been there since the night she left. He refused to give his name, but gave the name of the hotel and his room number and said that he would answer any questions in private if headquarters wanted to send a man to interview him.

I have been dying to know what happened and whether the girl killed herself or not, but I guess I will never find out. Nothing has been in the papers about it, and the man isn't stopping at the hotel any longer.

It reminds me of another case, though not an exactly similar one. There was a man up in 187. He had not been home for a long time and his folks did not know where he was. The night he registered, while he was sitting in his room, the telephone rang. He picked up the receiver and heard a woman talking. The woman was talking to him, in a perfectly natural tone, and it was his mother's voice.

It is a long story I imagine. I can't give you the half of it. Every night for nearly a month, and sometimes for two or three nights in succession, a woman up on the Drive called the hotel and asked for Mr. P. G. Perry. She did not inquire whether he was registered here or not, but asked to be connected with his room. Nobody by that name was stopping at the Hogarth and I explained that to her night after night. Each night there was a note of expectation and hope in her voice when she called up and then there was a let-down and she thanked me in a tired sort of way.

ONE I asked her if she would leave her name and told her I would call her if a Mr. P. G. Perry should happen to register at the Hogarth. She told me that she was Mrs. Perry, gave me her phone number and volunteered the information that she called up all the hotels every week and the larger hotels every night.

HOW I BEGGED A FORTUNE

The sensational story of a professional New York beggar who lives in a suite at an expensive hotel, has an automobile and a chauffeur, and pays an income tax like a movie star. In next week's MIDNIGHT

I got into the habit of looking at the register and wondering where Mr. Perry was and why he was there instead of at home with his wife. I began to imagine what she looked like. I constructed a picture of her, sitting careworn but bravely hopeful at the telephone night after night. She had one of the sweetest voices over the phone, and I decided that she couldn't be anything but beautiful with a voice like that. I had a mental picture of a beautiful little woman with an expression of sadness on her face that was being etched more deeply each day, the kind of expression you see on a woman's face for one reason only—because she loves a man who does things to break her heart.

One night, sure enough, there was the name P. G. Perry scrawled on the register, and after it "Perth Amboy." Perth Amboy didn't mean anything. I was sure it was the right P. G. Perry and that he had picked Perth Amboy as a place convenient to New York where he could hide.

I called Mrs. Perry's number. A woman answered who said she was Mrs. Perry. But the voice was different; it was an older woman's voice. I connected her with room 187. Mr. P. G. Perry answered.

When he said, "Hello," she didn't ask him if he were Mr. Perry. She said:

"Phil, dear, this is Mama. Isabel wanted you to come home. She was going to have a baby."

"Yes?" His voice was hardly more than a whisper.

"The baby was born today. I think Isabel could have lived if the baby had lived, but it was born dead."

Silence.

"You had better come home, Phil."

She hung up and left her son holding one end of a cold line. He didn't say a word. There was dead silence for fully half a minute and then the click of his receiver on the hook.

I sent a porter up to 187 on the jump. He knocked on the door and asked Mr. Perry if he had called. Perry said that he had not but that the porter could wait and take his bag down. He started throwing things into the bag. He was white and he swayed as he walked across the floor, so the porter told me. Once he took a long pull at a pocket flask.

In a few minutes he had checked out and was in a taxi bound for the Drive. I saw him as he went through the lobby. He was a good looking young chap, with just a little selfish, cruel expression around his mouth to keep him from being handsome.

There are a lot of unfinished stories like that. I am not morbidly curious and don't go prying into people's affairs and I wouldn't want to know any more about that case than I know now. I was in at the climax. In fact, I guess I was a pawn in the game. But I wouldn't want to know all that happened.

Occasionally I get a chunk of comedy. Every night, of course, there are crazy conversations over the phone. People try to put over all kinds of things in a hotel, and a hotel in a city like New York is a place where they think they can get away with murder. And sometimes they can.

There was a chap in 316 not long ago who was on a glorious spree. He went into his room perfectly sober and with the intention of coming out sober, but with the determination to get drunk and stay drunk for several days between the time he went in and the time he came out. He was going to get wet all over and then he was going to get himself steam cleaned and pressed in the Turkish bath.

Twice he was saved from drowning in the bath tub. He hadn't any suicidal intent, but found it fascinating sport to fill the tub and throw things into it and finally throw himself into it with a hoot like a kid diving into the old swimin' hole. The second time, the water was turned off and he was told to modify his conduct or leave the hotel. Soon after that he began calling up a fellow he called Sol. He had Sol on the phone two or three mornings and each time invited him to come around to the hotel.

ON the fourth or fifth morning he was fairly sober, but considerably excited. He got busy on the phone just as I was about to be relieved at seven o'clock. He wanted the manager, the house detective, police headquarters, the office of the police commissioner and about everything except the Department of Justice. Somebody had stolen his watch and chain, cuff links, fountain pen, wallet, trousers, shoes and hat.

I sent the house detective to 316, and our friend was discovered in a sober but nude condition, searching feverishly for the articles mentioned.

He still had his beeveedees.

A complete inventory showed that he also had his vest, socks, shirt, collar and tie, and his identification card. His bag, which had originally been filled with hootch, was still there, but in a battered condition.

Eventually, under the mattress, where he had put them very carefully and then forgotten them, were found pawn tickets corresponding to the various articles missing. He was as surprised as anybody. He couldn't understand how he had pawned the things when he had brought them into the room with him. He rested his case on the fact that he had certainly worn the trousers.

He didn't remember Sol, though he confessed to knowing a fellow called Sol who worked for a Sixth Avenue pawnbroker. I located Sol, who confessed to letting the occupant of 316 have money on three occasions within a week, thus enabling him to keep enough drinks ahead to prolong his spree.

The biggest thrill I ever got was the night Gentleman Louis framed a guy over in Jersey City. Louie

(*Continued on Page 20*)

We have a few back numbers of MIDNIGHT— But they're going fast ⊙

Send in your suggestions— The Editors are glad to hear from you ⊙

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Women who walk the streets of New York by night

One of the world's most famous newspaper women wrote this story. It will tug at your heart strings.

TIME was when the furtive-eyed woman with mascaraed eyelashes, and cheek bones picked out with carmine, the woman who greeted a stranger at the street crossing, addressing him with the endearments that should have been reserved for friends, was a feature of New York by night. Brilliant-eyed bats of the metropolitan shadows such women were. As surely a part of the city as the lamp-posts and the street corners. They were accepted institutions.

Now we seldom see them on the streets. A rigid city government has ended their nocturnal promenade. With their passing went the famous Night Court for Women at that clearing-house of vice, the Jefferson Market Court House. Beneath the roar and rattle of the passing elevated trains the troubles and frailties of women are weighed and the scales of justice adjusted to them by a woman judge, at the dingy red building at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street.

The furtive-eyed woman with the paint high on her cheek bones has been driven from the street and to cover. She lives in a flat, less often under the same roof with her own kind, than beneath a roof-tree with Puritans. The city has scattered her sort as a physician tries to scatter a poison in the hope of diminishing its power and eliminating it from the system. New York believes the so-called "endowed" or "detained" women is a slighter menace to public morals than is her pedestrian sister. Keep the vicious goods out of the show window. Keep the lid on the sewer. So reasons the current municipal government. The theoretical moralists and the guardians of city morals, as always, differ.

Who have succeeded these pedestrians of the city by night? Two widely different kinds. The moths and the workers.

The moths are derelicts of less comely aspect than those of the glittering eyes and the smiles for all. The women of the pavements wore smart clothes. Their gowns were expensive. Their hats had the New York touch which is accounted in smartness a revival of the Parisian. Clara Morris told me of being shocked by the unrestricted vocabulary of a well-dressed woman whom twice she had met on the corner while Miss Morris, carrying a handbag with her change of linen home to be laundered by her mother's careful hands, made her way to the street car.

WITH a preface of many powerful expletives the handsome, well-dressed one said: "I'll smash your features if you don't stay off my beat. Your face won't be no use to you when I get through with it."

To which Miss Morris gaspingly replied:

"I—I beg your pardon, Madam. We are in a different line of business. I am an actress."

"Don't lie to me."

"But it's true. I am playing at Daly's Theatre. The principal part."

"No use handing me that. Anyway, whether you are or not, if you walk this block or the next one again I'll give you a beating that will keep you from acting for a year."

Miss Morris reluctantly accepted fate. For the rest of the season she was driven to what seemed to her the unwarrantable expense of hiring a hansom. The next year she ventured upon the street, without the aid of a cab, only when she had been assured that the woman who claimed the two blocks as her own was serving a six months sentence at Blackwell's Island.

"We can save cab hire all winter, Mother, unless my opponent is pardoned," reported the actress. "But la' she was handsome and how I envied her her fur coat and velvet hat."

The moths that are the successors of these who walk by night on Manhattan Island are of unlovely aspect. Their faces are of the whiteness of chalk. Their eyes are strained. Their clothes are of the shabbiness that proclaims neglect or poverty. Both perhaps, but certainly neglect. The drug addict cares not that the hem of her dress is loose, nor that her coat is worn and torn. The angle at which she wears her hat is negligible. It is a mere faded concession to the habit of wearing hats. If in her haste after some goal, invisible to those who watch her, the hat slips from her head she does not stop to replace it. She has not missed it. It lies forgotten and uncared for, as the soiled and faded petal of a withered rose.

The woman is a perfect example of concentration. She is a symbol of the single aim. She is seeking a drug of which she is an addict. Nothing save death will stop her search for it. If a blue-coated guardian of the welfare of the streets lays an arresting hand upon her sleeve she pierces the night with her shrieks. She pours a stream of maledictions upon

(*Continued from Page* 14)

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MURDERED by Telephone!

A review of the Broadway success, "Whispering Wires"

There is the echoing explosion of a revolver shot . . . Stockbridge, whose grave was dug in advance, falls groveling to the table.

A GRAVE had been dug for old Montgom Stockbridge, while he was alive, vigorou without any immediate intention of dying It was a high-handed outrage, and a sinister threat, and it terrified the millionaire.

Who had done it, or why, was beyond him. The first intimation he had of the affair came through a special delivery letter, addressed to him, and received while he was in conference with James Bennett, his lawyer. The letter calmly informed him that his grave had been dug in Ridgewood Cemetery and was ready for his reception.

When his secretary telephoned to the superintendent of the cemetery, the startling information was instantly confirmed. Apparently through Doctor Conroy, the family physician of the Stockbridges, an order had been received to dig into the private lot, and the grave-diggers were put to work at once, and now the grave was gaping for its undead prey! And of course the doctor knew nothing whatever about it.

This is the situation which rivets the attention of crowded audiences every night in the Forty-ninth Street Theater in New York; the beginning of "Whispering Wires," one of the most promising of a long series of good and bad mystery dramas which are deluging the metropolitan stage.

As a matter of fact, this hideous and grotesque threat against the life of Stockbridge comes at a time when he is heavily engrossed with the affairs of earth, and unwilling to think, even abstractly, of getting ready for the undertaker.

Affairs in his own household have approached a difficult crisis.

Doris, his beautiful daughter, has fallen inopportunely in love with a certain army captain, late of the Irish guards, Barry McGill by name—and against this match Stockbridge has squared himself with all the grim and gaunt ferocity with which for more than a generation he has dominated the industrial world.

THAT Doris loves Barry and that Barry loves Doris is of no influence in his immutable decision. That Barry crossed the ocean to plead his cause bothers him not at all. That Barry's family is excellent, and that personally he is an upstanding man, only irritates him.

What signifies most is that Barry is the son of his old enemy; that he is a symbol of an ugly episode of the past; that where Stockbridge once took a financial drubbing from Barry's father, Stockbridge now has a chance to get even with the son. Fate has played into his hands. He insults Barry at his own dinner table, and is ready to crush his hope of marrying Doris, smacking his lips in anticipation of a revenge so long delayed.

But young love often is obstinate. Old Stockbridge is no such fool as to miss that possibility. That is why he has called James Bennett, his lawyer, at the very outset of the play, to talk about his will. He is going to change his last testament, to make it disinherit Doris utterly if she marries the man of her choice.

It is in the midst of this will conference that the special delivery letter arrives, with its ugly announcement of the complete readiness of the grave.

For once in his life this implacable old millionaire is stirred uneasily. It is not a pleasant thought; the knowledge that one's grave has actually been excavated. Of course he has enemies. He boasts of his capacity for inspiring hate. It is one of his secrets of success. But a grave—

Ann Cartright, his horn-rim spectacled, but fairly personable secretary, is instructed to send at once for Drew.

Drew is a detective.

Having done this, Stockbridge recovers some measure of his old assurance, and brutal poise. Against his lawyer's timid protestations he waves a scornful hand, and shoos him out of the library. His fears dissipated, his plans for Barry McGill return to his mind. He orders McGill, who has been waiting below for an interview, to be sent to him at once.

The interview is nasty. Stockbridge had no wish to make it anything else. He gloats in the power suddenly thrust into his hands; the power to blast the happiness of his enemy's son. Words follow violently upon words, harshness gives way to bitterness; a threatening altercation is upon them almost before either is aware how angry both have become; Barry McGill is saying things for which he

(*Continued on Page* 14)

Words follow violently upon words, harshness gives way to bitterness; a threatening altercation is upon them.

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Harry Kellar, one of the greatest stage magicians who ever held an audience spellbound by his wizardry and his compelling personality

The Woman who let me go

This is the seventh of a series of "stories that now see print for the first time" by a cub newspaper reporter - - -

IF Harry Kellar, the wise old necromancer who baffled and delighted the American public for forty years with his illusions, were alive today, I am certain that he would enter one experience of his in the "Most Thrilling Midnight Adventure Contest."

But Kellar is dead, and if I may, I shall tell the story for him, just as he once related it to me.

It happened when Kellar was touring South America with his show of wonders and mysteries. One night, in the theater at Montevideo, the magician noted, soon after the curtain rose on the first act of his entertainment, that a beautiful woman in the right-hand stage box was regarding him with intent and yearning eyes.

In those days Kellar's head was not the bald, round dome which subsequently became so familiar on his show posters. He was a vigorous specimen of manhood, with a rugged yet attractive face, and flashing, promising eyes. Moreover, he was full of the adventurous enthusiasm of youth, and was an ardent admirer of feminine beauty.

In the parlance of the stage, Kellar therefore, and quite naturally, played up to the lady in the box. When he wanted a card selected for the purposes of his trick, he approached her box and solicited her assistance. When he shook a profusion of red and yellow roses from an apparently empty paper cone, and then threw them out over the heads of the spectators, he took pains to see that the largest and most odorous blossoms fell at the feet of the fair stranger. And finally, when he needed to borrow the handkerchief of a lady in order to perform a feat in thaumaturgy, he bowed and smiled in the direction of the box and asked the lady if she would so greatly condescend. Which she did, blushing prettily.

It was what one might justly term a dainty magical flirtation.

When Kellar received the dainty bit of silken handkerchief, however, it was his turn to be surprised. Concealed within its soft folds was a tiny bit of paper.

"I knew," said Kellar to me, "that it must surely be some kind of message which she had hurriedly penciled. Probably she had been waiting for an opportunity to pass it to me, and my borrowing her handkerchief gave her just the chance she desired. I was thrilled from me head to my feet, tingling curiously with the lure of fresh mystery and adventure. What had she written to me? It was with the greatest difficulty—for I was a young magician then—that I concealed any hint of my feelings from the audience. As dexterously as I could, I palmed the little note, and a moment afterward slipped it into my pocket. Then I went ahead with the trick.

"But you perhaps can understand that my interest in the immediate performance was arrested. I was eager to get through; I wanted the curtain to fall, so that I could open that precious bit of notepaper and find what it was she had written to me. As a matter of fact, my inward agitation was my undoing. I failed most embarrassingly in two of my biggest tricks, and it was only by the hardest efforts that I retained the good opinion of my audience. I was so perturbed that not once again, during that first act, did I dare look in the lady's direction.

"At last the act was over. The curtain came down, then rose again, three times, most provokingly, for me to take bows that were really undeserved. My mind was off my work. I wanted to read that note.

"My friend, it was a most beguiling message.

"She told me she had fallen in love with me from my pictures on the posters, and had come to the performance simply because she could not resist. Now that she had seen me, her love was greater than ever. Her carriage would be in waiting at the stage door. Would I enter it, when the performance was over?

"Would I?

"What would any young man, single, unfettered by any ties, hungry for excitement, do under such circumstances?

"I don't know how I got through the remainder of that performance. It dragged like an eternity. But when at last it was finished, and I had got into street clothes and taken the make-up off my face, I fairly ran to the stage door. There, sure enough, was a very imposing carriage, closed, and drawn by two milk-white horses.

"A STERN-FACED man, much resembling in his looks the mountaineers I have seen in Italy, got down off the box and opened the door, muttering something in a respectful tone. I hurried into the darkness of the carriage, and the door was closed upon me.

"I was alone in the carriage with this beautiful stranger.

"Her eyes were so large, so soft, so tender that I thrilled when I bent over and looked into them. I reached out and sought her hand. It was soft and slim, and responded instantly to my fervent pressure. I was deliriously happy.

"Meanwhile the carriage had turned and was clattering away. I did not care where it was going. I did not care where she was taking me. I was hypnotized by her—by the seductive perfume that surrounded her with fugitive elusiveness, by the warm consciousness that we were alone together.

"'Tell me about yourself,' she said, in soft Spanish.

"I was glad of the invitation. I felt constrained, and this was something to do. I prattled away, while the carriage continued on its shaking course, apparently climbing higher and higher into the mountains. We had driven perhaps half an hour when she put her hand over my mouth to silence me.

"'I am an adventuress,' she cried, in husky tones. 'I am ashamed. You are a brave man, making a hard fight, and just climbing out of your debts. I am a trap. I am here to lure you. Lure you to the mountain den, where waits a robber band to take your money, maybe kill you by cutting your throat. No. Many times I have done this. Tonight your eyes make me feel bad. I am ashamed. I am afraid I love you. I shall save you!'

"'Yes, for God's sake do!' I exclaimed, totally disillusioned in an instant. I had been thinking what an attractive youth I must be to win the favor of such a beauty. Now the trickster was tricked. I knew now how it felt.

"'Listen,' she said earnestly, 'I am in love with you. This man driver will do what I say. If you love me, I let you go.'

"All my enthusiasm for love-making had congealed, but I assured her that I was willing to love her to death, if that was what was necessary.

"She cried out to the driver, and the horses were halted. Then she turned and smiled at me seductively."

* * * * *

"I HAD to walk all the way home," mused the magician murmuringly, "but I didn't mind. I was sorry to part company with such a singularly charming woman. But did any man ever purchase his liberty at a stranger price?"

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Murdered by Telephone

(*Continued from Page* 12)

will presently be sorry when the door is dashed open and Drew, the detective, appears.

OF course, Drew heard the threats. Of course, he also heard Barry's instant apology—but what is an apology, after a threat of death? Besides, a grave is an upsetting procedure, when that man is alive. It makes one suspect almost anything of anyone who was angry with him. The detective asks for, and gets a lot of information from Stockbridge, about Barry, and about his other enemies. There is plenty of material. The world abounds in the man's enemies. Sing Sing prisons one of them—a man with imagination and energy. Of him, Stockbridge is frankly uneasy. But Drew laughs at that. Drew put the man in Sing Sing. It's a hard place to get away from; the prisoners get attached to it, whether they want to or not.

In the midst of their deliberations, the telephone rings. The secretary answers, but says someone insists upon speaking personally to Stockbridge. He replies, barking his usual gruff voice into the transmitter.

But suddenly a change overwhelms him.

He is plainly a badly frightened man. He gasps inarticulate words into the 'phone, and his hand is quivering as he replaces the receiver.

Someone has told him he will be dead in two hours!

It is an inhuman threat which he has received. Let him hire all the smart detectives in the world; let him shut himself out of the world as he may, death shall strike him presently; he shall die within those prescribed two hours; his crumpled corpse will be ready for the grave already cut and dug for him.

The man of iron is a shattered bunch of nerv .

Even the detective is startled. He puts under way the most extraordinary precautions. A flying squad of assistant sleuths is summoned. The telephone company is notified, and a trouble man arrives, who cannot find anything wrong with the instrument, although immediately after that sinister call the phone went dead. Guards are flung around the house. Servants are questioned—especially one Irishman, a private from McGill's company, who worships his former captain. Finally, Stockbridge is left alone in the room.

Outside his door stands a detective with drawn revolver. Every entrance to the house is guarded. The windows open on a sheer drop of thirty feet.

How can a murderer possibly reach this trembling man?

The telephone rings. Old Stockbridge at first settles himself to ignore its challenging buzz. But his nerves are too unstrung. He will answer it. He does answer it. He even manages to infuse some of the old fight into his voice as he replies.

The voice at the other end of the wire is insistent upon identification. Is this actually Montgomery Stockbridge talking? Yes, damn it, it is.

Crash!

There is the echoing explosion of a revolver shot, and Stockbridge, the industrial king, Stockbridge who had been marked for death within two hours, Stockbridge who had been so completely protected, Stockbridge whose grave was dug in advance—falls grovelling to the floor.

The door is beaten down and the detectives reach his side only in time to hear some almost indistinguishable words before death finishes the prediction of the assassin.

Who? What? How?

That is the question the people in the audience are asking, between the intermissions. It is fun to hear their conjectures. One person says that Ann Cartright did it; there were hints that the secretary was really a spy in the employ of that man Stockbridge had had sent to prison. Another is sure that it is too obvious; the lawyer did it, because he seems so innocent. One woman is certain the Irish servant did it, so that Barry could marry Doris, without losing the money; the old man never got the chance to sign his changed will. Some even suspect Barry himself. A few wiseacres who have been to see "The Bat" twice, are certain the detective did it.

But they all have to sit until the end of the play to find out.

Meanwhile, the curtain is rising on the second act, which is set in an elaborate hallway outside the library, with a wide sweep of curving staircase in the back. In a few words we learn a great deal. Drew has kept the police away by pretending it is suicide. The reporters have surrounded the house. Barry has been smuggling messages to Doris, and they are going to try to meet at five o'clock in the afternoon. It is almost five now. And the more that Drew thinks about it, the surer he is that Barry is guilty.

"Crimes begin with motives," he asserts. Well, he thinks Barry had a motive.

A new and surprising complication occurs in the total disappearance of Bennett. The old lawyer is in none of his familiar haunts. The wise guys in the audience wink sagely at their companions. The lawyer is the crook!

And then the lawyer shows up—bringing with him a wild story of having been kidnapped, drugged and kept a prisoner all night. The detective almost laughs in his face; but there is a queer gleam in his eye that doesn't reflect humor. Just then Barry arrives, and is promptly accused of the murder. Drew is certain he can land him, and is almost ready to send for the police when something happens to open his eyes.

He overhears a tender love scene between Barry and Doris which absolutely clears the handsome young Irishman of any suspicion. And Drew is man enough to offer his hand and apologize.

But who did do it?

WHO KILLED OLD STOCKBRIDGE?

Locked alone in a room, with every entrance guarded by detectives, this two-fisted old millionaire was suddenly, inexplicably shot to death.

Who did it?

How was it accomplished?

What was the motive—avarice or vengeance?

Read the story of "Whispering Wires" and see if you can fasten the guilt where it belongs—on a beautiful girl, or a brave young man, or the lawyer—

Or—

It's up to you!

THE question is no nearer being answered than before. There's Ann Cartright now. She's a queer girl She was a spy on Stockbridge, in the pay of his enemies. And she burned up that special delivery letter. Why? Because she was afraid the writing would be identified? Some friend of hers, eh? All her actions are suspicious. The detective will watch Ann Cartright.

Just at this time, two important events follow, one on the heels of the other.

The man Stockbridge sent to Sing Sing has escaped. That information comes direct. He is at large, and his only desire for liberty is known to be revenge on the man so mysteriously murdered.

As this significant information is being digested, a call comes on the telephone.

It is the same voice, the same man who called the night before. And he has called on an identical errand—but now his threat is for Doris.

Before midnight Doris shall be slain.

Let her appeal to Barry, let her cry to Drew, let her wrap herself around with a whole cordon of detectives—yet death will snatch her in its grisly arms as precisely, as promptly, as inevitably as it came and called her father.

It gives the audience something to think about during the second intermission.

But between the acts a terrific chase had been going on. One of the detectives—a gay young blood who was sparking the French maid in between clues—saw a man at the telephone cable box and fired. He winged him and pursued. At the beginning of the third act, we learn that he finally caught the man and he is brought into the library.

It is the man sent by the telephone company to fix the 'phone the night before.

Before Drew finishes with that fellow, he has abstracted enough information to solve almost the entire mystery. Yes, he hated Stockbridge. Yes, he did his part in the killing. Yes, he was proud of it. And then he sees Ann Cartright.

Ann was his sweetheart!

There is a tangled web of plot right there. He had been in hiding in South America for three years, and was a tricked associate of the man in Sing Sing. There had been a lot of double-crossing. Too late he learns that Ann was faithful all the while. At heart he was not a crook; he was just caught in a jam of destiny.

But he is rebellious. He will tell them nothing. The death that lurks in this library is implacable. They cannot escape it. He is an electrician and he knows.

It is almost midnight. The hour named by the hidden murderer is at hand. Yet Doris is still safe.

The telephone rings again.

Doris is about to answer it, when Drew intervenes. He asks Miss Cartright to answer it. The secretary moves calmly across the room, but a hoarse shout escapes from the lips of the prisoner. Wildly he flings her aside, and lifts the receiver from the hood. There is an instant explosion.

The source of the mysterious death is thus disclosed.

A revolver was hidden in the earpiece, attached to an electrical connection, dischargeable by vibration. To cause the explosion, all the man at the other end of the wire had to do was shout. The noise made the revolver explode.

Of course, the man from Sing Sing was the guiltiest of them all, and of course Drew's hefty sleuths landed the entire outfit. But the curtain falls on all kinds of promises being made to help poor Ann and her more-sinned-against-than-sinning lover.

Now reader, tell the truth.

Did you guess the guilty man?

Women Who Walk the Streets

(*Continued from Page* 11)

him. The officer is in danger as great as though a gunman menaced him. For this woman at bay has the ferocity and the intent of a murderess. She must have the "stuff." Somewhere, lurking in the shadows of the elevated road, or in a secluded doorway she will find a merchant of the "coke" or the "white stuff." He will be there. He is waiting for her and others like her. She will know him by his stealthy look from beneath a down-drawn hat. By the thrust into his pocket which brings up a small and precious package, hidden perhaps in a soiled handkerchief or a tattered glove. By some freemasonry, some mystic gesture, they will know each other though they had never met before. Her glance, pale but intent, rests upon him. His, gimlet like, pierces her poor pretense at indifference. They chaffer and bargain for the opium or the cocaine or heroin. The result is always the same. She pays every cent of the sum in her ragged purse or that is clutched in her grimy hand.

Then she slinks away into the darkness. Avoiding the burly forms in blue. Avoiding everybody. For the addict lives for but one thing, the dose and the forgetfulness and the fevered dreams that follow.

They are unmistakable, these moths of the night. Pale moths for whom the white lights are but guides to the shadows, for whom Broadway is but to be crossed hastily into the side streets. A glance into their faces and one knows that he has looked upon a mind that is wandering afar, that he is seeing the one who is moving in the gray shadow of death.

WOMEN of another sort there are who walk the city streets by night. Women sturdy and unafraid. Women who are hastening about their business or are returning from it.

The women beneath whose cloaks peep white linen skirts walk with a brisk professional air. They are nurses. They may have left their charges for a few minutes of filling their lungs with clean air. They will return to the bedsides of the sick to watch the current of life gather strength. Or they may watch it ebb and end. They are strong women and hold their emotions in check. The chilly-eyed surgeon, the lecturer who presented their diplomas, had warned them to keep feeling in leash, always to endeavor to forget the personality in the case. A case was bigger than any person because to some extent it confirmed or enlightened science. Sooner or later all persons must die but science would live forever.

That tired-faced young woman whose steps drag a little is a newspaper woman. The weariness of her face is a characteristic of Park Row. Elsa Barker, the poet, used to lunch at Mouquin's before the Volstead Act closed it. To Mouquin's came lawyers, brokers, clothing dealers and newspaper folk.

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"I felt his arms draw my warm body close to his own, saw his sensuous leer, his face flushed with unspeakable desire as he brought it closer—closer—"

Shame's Auction Block

A daring, enthralling story by Leyla Duane Complete in this issue

AS I looked over the bridge's rail, even my desolation, my determination to end the hopeless struggle against Fate, could not make the dark, swirling waters in the shadows below, look as inviting as I had imagined. I hesitated, then shrugged my shoulders. One sudden plunge and all my troubles would be over. I raised a foot to the railing.

A strong hand grasped my shoulder and pulled me back to safety.

"Whither bound, sister? Suicide, you know, is a sure passage to Inferno."

I turned, to look into two eyes that sparkled even in the semi-darkness.

"Mercy! I thought you were a policeman!"

My saviour released his grip on my arm.

"Mercy? You don't deserve any! As for a policeman, perhaps I had better call one. It's a crime to waste beauty like yours, that way."

"Beauty doesn't buy food and drink. Or pay room rent. That is, unless a girl——"

"Beauty—plus virtue! What a rare combination, these days!" The man seemed to be speaking more to himself than to me. He must have caught the angry flash of my eyes. "No offense, sister. That's a beastly trick of mine,—speaking my thoughts aloud. I'll stake all the jack in my jeans the trouble with you is that you're hungry."

"Somewhat," I admitted, "I *did* breakfast on toast and coffee."

He snapped open his watch before replying.

"And it's close on to midnight, already. I could eat a bit, myself, and I haven't missed a square meal in years. How would the idea of supper appeal to you?"

"What's the use?" bitterly, "It won't do me any good where I'm going!"

"Haven't you gotten rid of that crazy notion? Come," he linked his arm in mine.

Mechanically, I fell into step beside him. We had left the bridge well behind before my reeling senses cleared enough to permit me to realize what I was doing. I came to a sudden halt.

"Who are you? Where are you taking me?"

"A thousand pardons!" He disengaged his hand long enough to find his card case, and passed me a square of cardboard. "Allow me to introduce myself."

A street-lamp afforded light enough for me to read the name on the card. I turned to my rescuer with a little gasp of surprise.

"Gerald Paine! Not——the illustrator?"

"The same! I see that my fame has gone before me."

One by one they bought her clothes as she stood on the table before them. One by one her garments were paid for and removed. Finally— . . . the rest is for you to discover, and if we know anything of human nature, you'll read every word of this remarkable story.

I NODDED. Everyone had heard of Gerald Paine. Not only were his nudes heralded as the most daring in recent years, but he also seemed to have a penchant for getting his name in the papers through meddling in other people's affairs. I had seen it often in the few months I had been in the city. With what I knew of him, as I look back upon things, I wonder that I did not choose the river, rather than his proffered aid. But I was desperate—I was young—Life was sweeter than I had thought!

"You see," he continued, "Beauty,—particularly in distress,—holds an irresistible lure for me. I would have told you who I was, before, but the moment didn't seem opportune. My main object was to lead you away from the temptation of the moment."

"Into, perhaps, a greater one?"

"If you find it so, the river is still there." I shivered at the allusion, and he went on, "My idea is, first to give you a good, square meal; then have a little, heart-to-heart talk. It may be that I can suggest a way out of your difficulties."

Despite myself, I felt that I was slipping into his mood.

"And in return, you would ask?"

"Your confidence. Added to which I would have the satisfaction of having cheated the river out of a potential victim."

"You talk too good to be true!" I paused, again, to look deep into his laughing eyes. "Lead on, Sir Galahad! Only, remember, I'm ravenous!"

With the surety of one who had been there many times before, my guide piloted me to the restaurant he had mentioned. Safely ensconced at a table in a quiet corner, he scanned the menu, and, without so much as consulting my tastes, ordered a meal that showed a keen insight into the needs of an empty stomach.

SOME time later I pushed aside the last empty dish, and breathed a sigh of supreme satisfaction. Then, over the coffee cups, I poured my story into the willing ears of my benefactor.

There was nothing startlingly original about it. The death of my widowed mother; a year of the dull monotony of the small, Rhode Island town; the call of the big city, with its lure of myriad opportunities; the succeeding months of failure to secure permanent employment because of my reluctance to market my virtue along with my stenographic ability; the black moment when, the last shred of cash gone, I was faced with the inevitable choice—to throw myself into the river, or yield.

"But, surely," the artist prompted, "there must be some way for you to raise a little money. Your jewelry?"

I spread ringless hands upon the table.

"That was the first to go,—what little I had."

Paine studied me across the table. I knew he was cataloguing my clothes. I recalled his glance at my silk-clad ankles as he had led me into the cafe.

"Had you thought of selling any of your surplus clothes?"

I gave vent to a mirthless, hollow laugh.

"So you, too, were fooled? Perhaps it was extravagance, but without a decent appearance, I didn't feel that I would have even a ghost of a chance. "I'm wearing the only clothes I have."

For a moment, the man's eyes burned into my own. I shrank beneath the intensity of his gaze.

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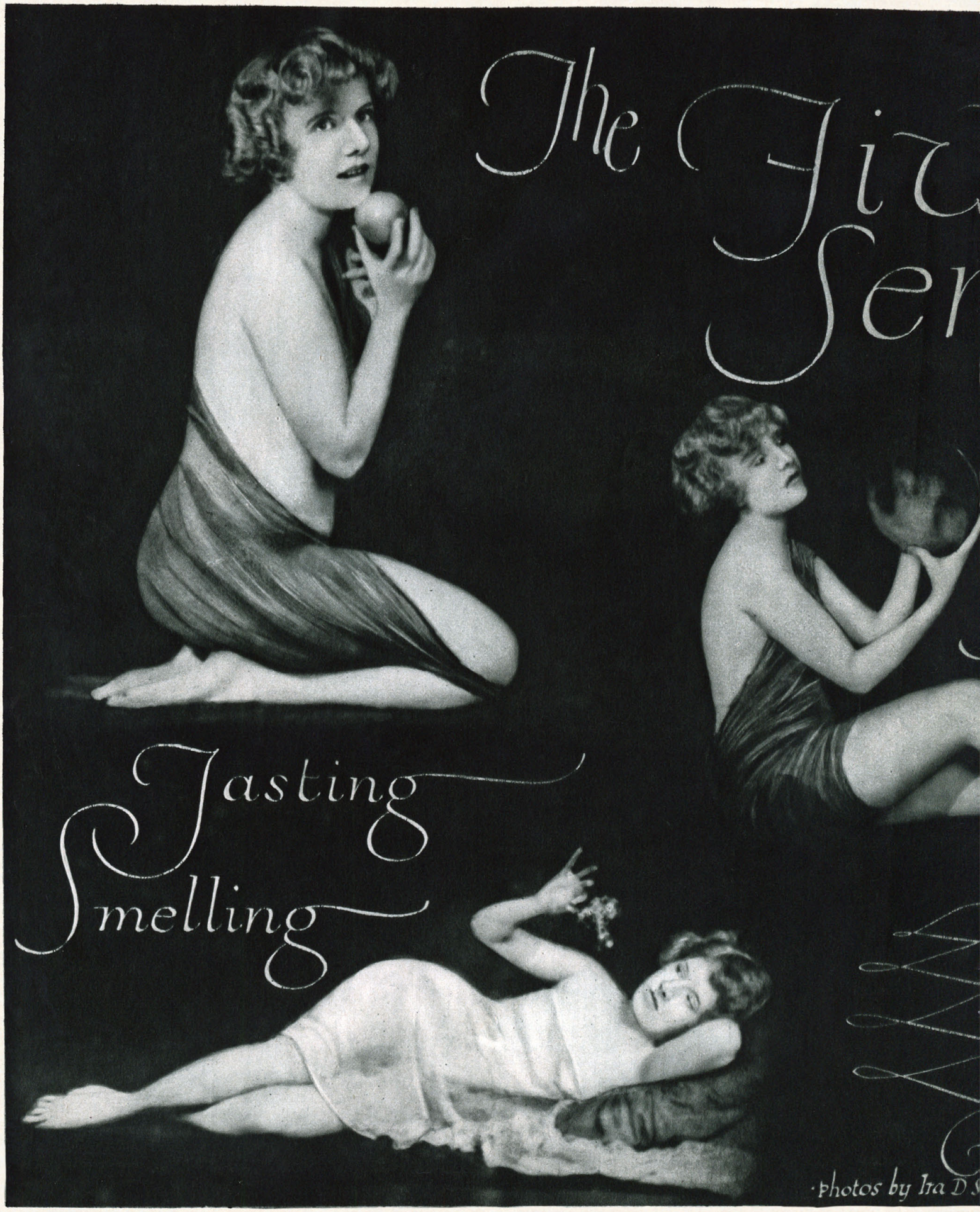

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Shame's Auction Block

(*Continued from page* 15)

When he spoke again, the flippancy was gone from his tone. In its place was an earnestness that compelled my attention.

"Then,—why not sell *those*?"

I felt the hot blood mount to my cheeks. My eyes wavered, and dropped to the table. So this was to be the price of my salvation?

The artist seemed to read my thoughts. He caught one of my jewelless hands in his own.

"I know that sounds like a darned, unconventional proposition. All right, let's admit that it is. A desperate situation sometimes calls for an equally desperate remedy. After you leave me, what then? The river, again?" Once more, I shuddered, and the man went on, "You are too young, life is too sweet, for that. All that you lack is something to give you a fresh start. I have something in the nature of an idea that will supply that need. The decision, of course, will rest with you. But remember, girlie, it's far better to barter your clothes than to sell your soul!"

"But——where——how——"

For the second time, he glanced at his watch.

"Just midnight. There's still plenty of time. There's a studio, not far from here, where a bunch of my artist friends are running a stag. They're good for another hour, anyway. Their combined bankrolls could buy the entire county you came from! Every one of them's a dead-game sport!"

"But, still I don't see——"

"Come up to the studio with me. Let me tell them how you are situated. Then, *let me auction off your clothes*!

"The novelty of the stunt is sure to appeal to them. With your looks, they'll fall for it like a crippled aeroplane! None of them know you, none of them have ever seen you, before; and, unless you choose, none of them need ever see you again. With the proceeds, you can buy a brand-new outfit, and have a nice little nest-egg left over to hunt out fresh fields and start life over. There is not time to hesitate. Come, which shall it be? That—or the river?"

I never could tell whether it was because of my new-born desire for a fresh lease on life; or whether it was the hypnotic power in his eyes, the magnetism of his modulated, soothing tones. Another time, another place, and I know I would have revolted in stark horror from his scheme. A moment later, the artist was helping me into my wraps; another, and I was seated beside him in the taxicab, my mind a chaos of conflicting emotions.

II

ALREADY, I was regretting my impetuous decision. Already, my conscience was prodding me with increasingly poignant pangs. But, I reflected, it was too late to turn back, now. The die was cast. At the longest it could be but a short while before it was all over, before I would be free to leave the dust of the city behind and start all over again. I had burned all my bridges behind me. The thought of bridges reminded me of the river. After all, I had not chosen unwisely. I *was* young. Life *was* sweet. Hundreds of unexplored paths lay at my feet to lure me on.

From my vantage point atop the table where the artist had lifted me, I looked through the blue haze of smoke that filled the studio, into a dozen, upturned faces. Twelve pairs of eyes were focused upon me. To me, they seemed rapacious for the moment when, stripped of my protecting garments, naked as Eve, they could feast them upon my chaste virginity.

Gerald Paine had painted my desperate circumstances in vivid colors. I marveled at his powers as a speech-maker. Now his voice took on a note of banter, a tone calculated to prod his auditors into action.

"So this young lady, whose identity of course must remain concealed, has decided to let you gentlemen help her, financially, by giving you the chance to buy her clothes! With your permission, each garment will be auctioned off, here and now, to the highest bidder. But, remember, gentlemen, you are not simply buying her clothes. For, each successful bidder will be privileged *to remove his purchase with his own hands*!"

My eyes dilated. *That* was going a step too far! I lifted a hand in protest, then dropped it to my side. It was too late, now, to offer any objections. I might just as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. I steeled myself for the ordeal, and faced them with a cold, impassive stare.

A murmur of approval swept the studio. Beneath the cover of the hum of voices, the artist reached up and touched the tips of my fingers. The contact strengthened me, appreciably.

"That *was* laying it on a bit thick," he told me, sotto voice, "You're game to the core!" He rapped on the table for attention.

"Ready, gentlemen?"

The voices died away. Paine reached out and caught my ankle, lifting it for their inspection.

"How much am I offered for this pair of stylish, French-heeled pumps,—with buckles, 'n ev'rything?"

The silence was unbroken.

"Come on, gentlemen, who's going to be the first one?"

From somewhere in the room came a tremulous voice. I turned my eyes in its direction. It was the youngest of the group, who had spoken.

"Five dollars."

"Ten." This time it was a heavy-jowled, coarse-lipped creature from the other side of the studio.

"Fifteen." The young man, once more; this time his voice firmer, more determined.

"Fifteen—fifteen," chanted the pseudo-auctioneer. "Do I hear twenty? Sixteen? Sold! Come on, Bob, and get your prize. All goods sold on the cash and carry system!"

THE youth came forward, laid a ten and a five on the table, and as I extended one foot after the other, removed my pumps and retreated to his chair. As I lowered each shoeless foot to the table-top, I wondered what would be the next to go.

This time, Paine lifted my clinging skirts high in the air.

Did you ever dream that you were running madly down the main street of your town clad lightly but becomingly in a modest smile, and that the entire population was chasing you? If you did, you may imagine what the heroine felt, when, one by one, her garments were bought—and removed.

"We have next to offer you, gentlemen, one pair of sheer, silk stockings. All silk, gentlemen, clean to the tops! Who wants to take 'em home to his wife——or someone else's?"

I could feel my cheeks redden. A hot flush swept over me. I bit my lip to control my emotions. If I felt that way, now, how would I feel, a few moments later, when those protecting skirts, too, were gone? I *must* go through with it—there was no other way!

The bidding was more spirited, this time. I wondered if one pair of silk stockings had ever brought so high a price, before! This time, it was the sensuous-lipped man, who had made the one bid on the slippers, that stepped forward to claim his own. This time, it was a crisp, new, hundred-dollar note he laid atop the pile.

I cringed as his clumsy fingers fumbled with the snaps of my supporters; shuddered as he rolled down the coverings from my white limbs with coarse, harsh hands. Another wave of doubt threatened me as I felt every eye in the room on my bare, well-rounded calves; my trim, shapely ankles. Yet, why should I care, I asked myself? Hadn't I seen hundreds of pictures of bathing beauties on magazine page and movie screen who were utterly without self-consciousness in much more scanty apparel than I wore?

Garment followed garment in rapid succession. At last I stood before them in a single garment of gossamer thinness; a garment that served to accentuate the pink-whiteness of the skin that glowed beneath it, that illy concealed the lithesome curves of my sinuous, youthful form.

The color receded from my cheeks as I pictured what the next few moments held for me. Already there was over five hundred dollars in the pile upon the table. And then came a thought which made me sway, unsteadily, as the full purport of it burst over me. When that last garment was taken from me, I would be absolutely at the mercy of the men the studio contained! I would be absolutely shorn of clothes except the hat and coat I had worn there! There was absolutely no way of escape left to me! Again came the impression that these men were nothing more than wolves, waiting only for a propitious moment to pounce upon their prey. The blood in my veins burned hot as fire. I could not—*must* not—let this farce continue! I turned to Paine to voice a protest. Too late! Already, the bidding was on!

"Two hundred dollars!" he bantered, "I didn't think anybody could be such a cheap piker! The next one that bids less than five, I'll call it off, and buy it myself!"

Like the wolves I mentally pictured them, the men barked out their offers in quick succession:

"Five . . . five-fifty . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . eight-fifty . . ." they came a little slower, now, "nine . . . nine-fifty . . ."

"One thousand dollars!" It was the man who had bought the stockings, the man who, to me, seemed most revolting of them all.

The bidding stopped, despite Paine's unrelenting efforts to push it higher. At last he struck the table with his fists, and nodded to the man.

"Sold!"

The man advanced to the table. I could feel little chills running up and down my spine.

"Guess you'll have to take a check, Paine. I haven't got that much cash on me, tonight." He poised his fountainpen, checkbook in hand. "Who'll I make it out for?"

I wanted to cry out, to beg the artist not to tell my name. My dry, parched throat refused to function. But Paine was equal to the emergency.

"I thought I made it clear, Murchison, that the young lady was to remain incognito. Make it 'bearer,' if you please."

I breathed a silent prayer of thanksgiving. I wished it was the auctioneer or the youth who bought my shoes, rather than this loose-lipped libertine that was to culminate my night of shame. Yes, shame! I knew, now that it was too late, how foolish I had been. My heart was beating at trip-hammer speed. I could even excuse the artist for making me the proposition. As an artist, I could sense his attitude toward the unclad, female form. Oh, well, another moment and it would be over; another moment, and my abasement would be complete! I yearned to throw myself into the artist's arms and beg him to take me away, somewhere—anywhere—even the river!

Murchison dropped his check on the pile of bills. With an agility that belied his obese form, he stepped to the top of the table. Involuntarily, I shrank from him.

"Don't you think, little girl," he purred, his eyes ablaze with passion, "That a thousand dollars is a pretty big price for a man to pay for one, little, near-silk chemise? Come on, girlie, give me one little kiss to boot, and I'll call it square!"

I felt his huge arms draw my warm body close to his own, saw his sensuous leer, his face flushed with unspeakable desire as he brought it closer——closer——

I sensed, rather than saw, someone vault to the table-top; heard his fist as it crashed into the lecherous features; the crash of the huge bulk of the man as he toppled to the floor; caught vaguely through the whirling blackness that engulfed me, his voice as he jumped to the floor beside the fallen man.

"You damned, miserable cad!"

Then all went dark before my eyes——

III

I LIFTED my head from the arm on which it was pillowed and the liquid that was burning my throat like fire made me cough and strangle. I opened my eyes to look into those of the youth whom the artist had called "Bob."

"Whew!" he whistled, "It's about time you came out of it! I was just beginning to think you'd taken the count for keeps. It's a good thing I could bribe the janitor to let me have three fingers of the good, old stuff. This is my studio, you know. I'm Bob Duane," he explained, reading only blankness in my eyes, "the one who 'bought' your shoes."

My brain slowly cleared. No, it had not all been a nightmare. I was in the same room. Yes, there was the very table I had stood upon. I muffled a scream as I realized my dishabille. I wondered if, after all, they had——

Fearfully, I allowed my eyes to look down at what I could see of my recumbrant form. I was

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Why I kissed Jack Dempsey and why I will never do it again —

an interview with Florence Walton

Miss Walton, pictured at the left, has earned more money with her slender feet than any other woman living—not excepting Irene Castle, who has, indeed, earned the proverbial "barrel of money," but some of it has come from her screen work and much of it from her posing. This story, obtained and written by Margaret McIvor-Tyndall, is one of the few occasions on which Miss Walton has ever been interviewed

IT is said that Miss Walton, who has gone into vaudeville with her own company won't speak to Jack Dempsey even over the phone because of all the annoyance she has been subjected to on account of an insignificant innocuous, impulsive, innocent little kiss.

She is said to have declared that the proverbial village gossip in an angel of discretion compared to the average cameraman, and that while undoubtedly most movie-stars are painted worse than they are, there isn't enough black paint manufactured to represent the average press photographer.

Of course she may not have said it.

But just to show how lightly one may "trip over trouble"—using the phrase in quite another sense from that which the song-writer intended—here's the inside story of the kiss episode. Miss Walton told it to me herself during a conversation in her house on East Sixty-fifth Street, the while she lunched on—what do you suppose?

Sugarless, creamless weak tea. (One doesn't attain the fascinating sliver-like proportions of a successful dancer without some sacrifice.)

I admit that I trapped her into telling me. I had steered the conversation adroitly, following the lines laid down by authors of Memory-Culture courses, using the "association of ideas" and the "alliteration" methods.

I had gone from dancing to boots, from boots to boats, from boats to bouts, and before she knew it we were at the steamer with Jack Dempsey.

The rest was easy, but Miss Walton will never know how I struggled to get to that pier.

"Oh, by-the-way," I said nonchalently, as though the idea had just occurred to me," "how did you happen to kiss Jack Dempsey and why won't you ever do it again?"

That's what the unfeeling editor of "MIDNIGHT" yearned to know, so I had to ask it.

"That absurd old kissing affair again!" said Miss Walton, with a quick frown, which a most charming smile as quickly drove into a "fade-out." "I wonder if I will ever hear the last of that! Only the other day a dear friend of mine said to me, 'Florence, I can't imagine how you, who have always been so careful to avoid sensationalism in every way, was led into that kissing stunt.' And there it goes. One would think it the most important thing I had ever done, and as a matter of fact it was simply the result of a sudden impulse.

"Everybody at the boat was kissing everybody else it seemed. I had gone down to see my friends, Mary Baker and Mrs. Peter Cooper Hewitt off to England. Of course the cameramen and press photographers were there and they asked me if I were going abroad and I told them that I was only down to see my friends off.

"I had met Jack Dempsey only twice in my life, but a number of girls whom I knew well were there and they were all joking and pulling him about, teasing him about being afraid of a little possible sea-sickness and laughing at him and with him.

Mary Landon Baker and her dancing partner, pictured below. Miss Baker, Florence Walton's friend, is the young lady whose marriage to Allister McCormick has been postponed so many times

HE seemed such a big, overgrown boy to me—actually worrying about his first trip abroad that I felt as I would toward my own brother. The girls were grouped around him, all talking at once. Many of them kissed him good-bye. I was one among the many and the snapshots that were being taken must certainly have included many others, but when they were shown it looked as if Mr. Dempsey and I were the only persons at that boat.

"I thought no more about it, until some one called my attention to an evening paper. There we were, life-size, in a pose that looked, no doubt, to the casual reader like the tearful and osculatory parting of a pair of devoted lovers.

"Finally my friends began taking it seriously and asking me about it. But that is all there was to it. I haven't seen Mr. Dempsey since his return. I've been too busy for one thing. My time is so crowded that I have hardly a moment in which to see my friends—and really I hardly know Mr. Dempsey. No doubt he is a nice, likeable boy. People who know him well are very fond of him, but he really is hardly more than an acquaintance.

"No, I can't say that I especially like the fighter type of man. I like strength and health—I think all women do. In fact, I think it a duty every man and every woman owes to the world to keep fit and well, but there are other types than that of the fighter.

"I do, however, count Gorges Carpentier among my friends. During the years I lived in Paris, I knew Carpentier well. He was a great favorite in various social circles and he is a very charming man in every respect.

"No doubt Mr. Dempsey is also a fine chap—I do not know him well enough to judge."

Miss Walton went back to the subject of photographs and their undependableness.

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The Hotel Switchboard Girl

(*Continued from Page* 10)

made the Hogarth one of his hangouts in the old days, partly because a district leader he used to work with had a suite on the fourth floor. Louie was not in good standing with the management here or anywhere. He was too raw. But he had the pull and he was tolerated.

AT eleven o'clock one night, there was a call for Louie from Jersey City. I had him paged and pretty soon he came swaggering through the lobby and squeezed his bulk into a booth to take the call.

The party at the other end said: "Louie, it's Al. I'm at Mike Creel's garage. Joe is trying to make a getaway tonight. He's starting for the coast in an hour. He's going in a fast car he's just bought—and—"

"Let him," said Louie. "He might get bumped off if he stayed around here."

"Yes, but Louie, you don't understand. He's taking a lady with him."

"Lady! Is it Kitty?"

"I think it is."

"Listen, Al. Don't think anything about it. Is is Kitty?"

"Yes."

Louie raved. He didn't rave long though. In a minute he was calm and his voice was as cold and hard as a piece of cold steel.

"It's your job to stop him, Al," he said. "Listen now. Don't make me repeat this:

"Frank is still in Trenton. Phone him to meet you with two sets of Pennsylvania number plates. I'll catch Monk at Sam's restaurant and start him for Jersey City. Get him a car and a driver he can depend on. Let's see now. If Joe starts before Monk gets there, you start too and keep right on his tail light. When Monk catches you, you tell him to keep ahead of Joe for a few miles until he can pick the right spot. You keep behind Joe and if anything happens to Monk's car you can pick him up. After a while Monk will slow down. When Joe's car tries to pass, Monk will crowd him over. He'll get 'em then. You shoot by and wait down the road. Change the number plates. Monk will change the number plates on his car and send it back. Be sure and get a driver he can depend on, and get different plates somewhere if you don't go through Trenton. You and Monk push on. Let's see now. Better go up through Carbondale way. You can make a train somewhere along there that connects at Scranton with the Buffalo train that comes down through Binghamton. Come in from there. Phone me from Hoboken as soon as you get in. Wait a few minutes now for a call from Monk."

Louie hung up and came out of the booth red-eyed and savage, like a bull. He was perspiring; he wasn't used to thinking fast in such close quarters. He glanced over in my direction, hesitated an instant, and stepped across into a coin booth to call up Sam's restaurant. In a little more than a minute he came out and walked directly to the elevator. Ten minutes later he had checked out. But in that ten minutes I had reported the conversation to Carroll, the house detective, and Carroll had talked with Centre Street.

It would have been a simple matter for that gang to do away with the guy they called Joe and the girl who was running away with him. Somebody would have found them on a lonely part of the road. Joe would have been identified as one of a gang of New York gunmen, and probably the police would have suspected that he had died at the hands of one of his own gang. Nothing would have been done about it. Monk's driver would not have dared to squeal.

There would not have been much chance to stop the deal from going through either, except that I had heard Gentleman Louie call Sam's number dozens of times. I was familiar with the number and the police were familiar with the place. The central office men moved quickly and efficiently and, with the aid of the Jersey City police, they checked every attempt of Monk and Al to get under way; and they did it without letting on that they knew what the gangsters were up to.

In hotels like the Hogarth, especially in the theatrical district, there's more or less high jinks going on all the time. More dates are made in booths 1 to 6 inclusive than dreamed of in your philosophy. The telephone transients, as I call them, are drifting in and out all day and all night. Of course, there are a good many flirtations carried on over the room phones also.

Every third week I am on duty from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon. One morning recently a man just in from a trip registered and went up to his room to freshen up for the day. That was around eight o'clock. At nine he was calling his office, somewhere in the neighborhood. A girl answered.

"Do you know who it is?" he asked.

"Oh, good morning," she said. "Your train must have got in on time."

"It did. I'm at the Hogarth. I have an appointment here in an hour or so. Couldn't you come over with the mail and take some dictation here?"

"Oh, I couldn't," she said. "It's quite impossible."

"Why not?" he wanted to know.

"Why—I couldn't, really. You see the office is full of girls waiting to be interviewed."

"Full of girls? Waiting to be interviewed? I don't understand."

"Wait a moment, until I get on your phone," she said, and then I heard her ask somebody to hang up the receiver when she got on the other phone.

"Hello," she said. "I'm sure you will see that I am right."

"Right about what? What the devil are you driving at?"

He was nervous and hanging on her words as if he were expecting a shock. He was about to get one too.

"Well, you see," she said, "I put an ad in the Sunday papers. I saw your wife Saturday. She came into the office Saturday and I put an ad in the Sunday papers. You see?"

"No, I don't see," he snapped back.

"OH, I hate to hurt you," she said. "Your wife came in Saturday morning and we had a pleasant little visit together. She's so sweet! But she seemed worried. She was hoping that you would get back Saturday and that she wouldn't have to spend Sunday alone in that lonesome apartment. After seeing her, I couldn't possibly do what I had thought of doing."

"Ruth! You don't mean that! Ruth—listen, Ruth—"

"I can't talk to you now. I can't argue with you about it now or ever. There is no possible chance of my changing my mind. I married Dan yesterday."

"Oh, Lord!" Not really. Ruth, you didn't—"

"Please come over," she interrupted. "Don't sit in the hotel and brood about it. Come over and pick out a girl to take my place. I know it will be hard for you. I'm sorry. But we might as well get everything settled to-day. It will be better for you if I don't come back after to-day."

Cases like that are the exception. Ordinary flirtations are so common that it is a wonder I don't unconsciously prompt some of the birds that make tough work of it.

Just last Saturday there was another instance that was a little unusual. A young fellow came in during the rush hour and called a woman in Freeport, Long Island. I was too busy to pay much attention to it, but I had the key open for a couple or three seconds, from force of habit, I guess, and I heard the woman protesting that it was wrong for her to come to town to see him. It was a weak protest, and before I could find out whether she was going to give in or not, the one o'clock rush of office girls began. You know them. They wear their working clothes Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Saturday you look at one of them and say it must be a different girl again, and then you remember it's only Saturday.

To make a long story short, another chap called the same number in Freeport. It's funny how your mind flashes back and you pay more attention to a repetition like that when you discover it is the same number but a different man. I opened the key—naturally.

Evidently it was the maid who came to the phone. The man said it was Mr. Oaks talking and asked for Mrs. Oaks. The maid told him that the madame had just left and was on the way to the city.

"On the way?" says the man. "How come? I told her I'd call her around noon, but I got tied up in a conference."

"I think she is on the way to meet you at the Hotel Hogarth now," says the dumbbell maid. "Didn't you call?"

"No, I didn't. I just told you— Say, that's funny. She never did anything like that before."

Right there I broke the connection. I held the plug until the man came storming out of the booth and then plugged in again.

"I was cut off. Get that number again." He dived back into the booth, but before he could lift the receiver I had pulled down his line again.

Freeport was still on the wire. The maid was saying: "Hello, hello, hello, operator, hello."

"Hello," I said. "Is this Mr. Oaks' residence. I'm trying to get Mr. Oak's residence."

"This is Mr. Oaks' residence."

"I want to leave a message for Mr. Oaks. Mrs. Oaks expected him to call her. She will meet him at the Hogarth. She was not sure she told you that. Do you understand?" I repeated it in a hurry and cut her off. I didn't dare to keep him waiting any longer.

He came out of the booth just as I plugged in again and was repeating the number.

"I'm trying to get your party back," I said.

He stepped back into the booth and closed the door again, and just then the maid answered.

I PUT up his connection. "Here's your party," I said.

"Did you say my wife started for the Hogarth?" he began cross-examining.

"I think she said the Hogarth," said the maid.

"But why? She couldn't have expected to find me here. I am at the Hogarth now, but I just happened to step in here when I remembered that I hadn't called her from the office."

"Well, I don't know. She said she was going into the city to meet you. Maybe she said she was going to the Hogarth and to tell you to meet her there. I am not sure about it. She was expecting a call from you and I thought she got it. I guess she was trying to get your office. I think she said she was going to meet you at the Hogarth. She rushed out to get the train. I guess she meant for me to tell you when you called that she would see you at the Hogarth."

I held my breath. I was afraid she was going to say that somebody had just given her a message from his wife. But the maid had apparently collected her wits. Probably she had overheard the other telephone conversation and was beginning to wonder and to watch her step.

"Well, I'll wait here a while," said the man, and hung up. He came out of the booth and sat down in the lobby to wait.

The first chance I had, I looked around the lobby. I spotted the other chap sitting near the entrance and sent a boy over to get him. He came over.

"Did you call Freeport a little while ago?" I said.

"Yes, but I got my party all right," he said.

"Well, another man called the same number. I think it was her husband. In fact, I'm sure it was. He's in the lobby now waiting for her. You'd better head her off and tell her that he is expecting her, that he just happened in here to call her and was surprised to learn that she was coming here. I don't know how clever she is, but it will be best not to have her come into the lobby and bump bang into him and have to stammer a half-baked explanation. Tell her to tell him that she left instructions with the maid to tell him that she had started for town and would meet him at the Hogarth. She waited for his call and then tried to get him at the office, but didn't have much time and had to run for her train. Her husband has that idea now, and it won't do for her to stumble in with a conflicting story. Hustle down to the sidewalk and head her off. If she comes in a taxi, stop it before it gets in front of the door."

He did not have to be told twice, but started immediately for the door.

"Wait," I said. "You've got time to make the Long Island station. Catch her there."

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NATURE VS. THE MORAL LAWS

A frank and daring subject around which convention has hitherto thrown a discreet veil of silence. In next week's MIDNIGHT

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Thieves

A Play In One Act
by
Floy Pascal Cowan
and
Robert Thomas Hardy

There is more than one kind of thief. Read this little play if you want to find out about the kind of thief who steals from a woman what is above gold and jewels

PERSONS OF THE PLAY
EILEEN BELDEN
FRANK CONWAY, her husband's nephew
LAWSON, her butler
A burglar

SCENE.—*Living room of the Belden's suburban home. French windows at back give upon a balcony. Door at left leads to hall. Fireplace on right. In front of windows, and quite close to them, is a large, flat desk, with revolving chair placed so that the occupant's back is to the light. When the curtain rises the stage is unoccupied and dimly lighted.*

Presently a man is seen on the little balcony, fumbling with the window fastenings. He succeeds in opening the window, and silently enters. A cap is pulled over his eyes, but he can be seen to be a choice type of the gangster—mean, shifty-eyed, degenerate—a human rat. He stands listening a moment, then flashes his pocket light around the room. First he goes to the desk and examines contents of its drawers. In one of them he finds a revolver. He picks it up, and hesitates a moment, as if uncertain what to do with it. Then with a swagger he replaces it, his attitude saying, "Aw, wot t'hell!" He has discovered a wall safe and is beginning operations on it when he hears a slight noise. He looks around for a hiding place, decides on the heavy drapery at side of window, and steps quickly behind it.

"Don't come a step nearer! I'll shoot! You are out of your senses!"

The butler enters, carrying an armful of wood for the fireplace. He puts it down, then straightens up and stretches, as if sleepy. He is on his way out when he feels a draft, and looks toward the window. Surprised to find it slightly ajar, he goes over and is in the act of shutting it when the burglar slips around the curtain back of him and blackjacks him. The butler falls, and the burglar ties him up and gags him, then drags his unconscious body behind the further window curtain. He has begun again on the wall safe when an auto horn is heard and there is the sound of a car stopping. He goes to the window, peers out, shows annoyance. Seems undecided whether to make his escape or wait. Finally, as voices and laughter are heard in the hall, he goes back to his former hiding-place behind the curtain.

Mrs. Belden, a lovely young woman, enters, followed by Frank Conway, the usual type of society gentleman. Both are in evening dress. She turns on light and crosses over to fire.

MRS. BELDEN: "Urg! How good the warmth feels! Lawson is such a dependable old thing. No matter what time of night Harry and I come home he always has a good fire ready for us. You know I'm like a cat about warmth. (*Laughing.*) It makes me purr and draw in my claws."

CONWAY (*taking cloak from her shoulders*): "Oh, you haven't any claws, Eileen."

MRS. BELDEN: "Ask Harry! (*She sits down, holding a pretty slippered foot to the blaze.*) He doesn't encourage my use of them though. Knows how to rub me the right way—dear old thing!"

CONWAY (*standing by mantel, lighting cigarette*): "How long is my revered uncle to be away?"

MRS. BELDEN: "Oh—just a week, I think."

CONWAY: "He gave me an awful job, you know, to keep you amused."

MRS. BELDEN: "You made a wonderful beginning to-night! Oh, I did enjoy that play, Frank!"

CONWAY: "The play was fair to middling. My enjoyment came from being with you."

(*She gives a playful little tilt to her head, acknowledging the pretty speech.*)

MRS. BELDEN: "You know—Harry thinks a lot of you, Frank."

CONWAY: "He's been a good old scout to me. (*After a pause.*) I wonder if one doesn't always think a lot of someone he has befriended. (*Smiling.*) It doesn't argue any worth in the befriended one, you know."

MRS. BELDEN: "I believe that is a curious little trait in human nature. But Harry doesn't ever seem to react according to general human nature. He's a very, very——"

CONWAY (*with good-humored mockery*): "Very!"

MRS. BELDEN: "Special sort of person. He likes you and trusts you because (*whimsically*) you are—you."

CONWAY: "Just as he loves you because you are—you?"

MRS. BELDEN (*laughs softly, looking into fire*): "Yes, I'm so glad I am I."

CONWAY: "You aren't afraid here at night? Who keeps burglars and things away?"

MRS. BELDEN: "Oh, Lawson and my maid usually sleep on the place. (*After a moment.*)

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The butler falls and the burglar ties him up and gags him, then drags his unconscious body behind the further window curtain

Aren't you hungry? Push the button there, and maybe Lawson can find us something."

(*He presses the button. She lights a cigarette, waiting. He gives the button another long push.*)

MRS. BELDEN: "I wonder where Lawson is! Martha asked to spend the night with her mother, but Lawson ought to be here."

CONWAY (*smiling*): "Um—not so dependable, after all! Eh?"

MRS. BELDEN: "Oh, the best of them sometimes play 'hooky.' (*She gets up*) I'll make a raid on the pantry myself! You bring the little table to the fire, Frank."

(*She goes from the room, and Conway's eyes follow her, suddenly lit by an evil light. The servants are all away. The two are in the house alone! He stands for a moment with his base thoughts scurrying over his face. He wanders around aimlessly, then an idea strikes him. First listening to be sure that she is not returning, he goes to the desk, furtively pulls open the top drawer, takes out revolver, unloads it—putting the cartridges into his pocket—and lays it back into drawer. The burglar has viewed his approach with alarm, and has his own gun ready for business in case of discovery. He observes Conway's maneuver with astonishment.*)

MRS. BELDEN'S voice (*off stage*): "How about cold lobster?"

CONWAY: "Fine! You don't happen to have anything in a bottle, do you?"

MRS. BELDEN (*laughing*): "Ginger ale!"

CONWAY: "Oh, that!" (*Comes back to fire, lights a cigarette, and leans elbow on mantel, with his back to the windows.*)

(*The burglar casts a look of extreme dislike at the sleek, well-groomed aristocrat. There is something about him that arouses swift antagonism. Wonders what his game is. Would like to block it. He leans over, opens desk drawer, and takes out the now empty gun. Stands there with his own gun in one hand and the empty one in the other. Speculates. Then, on an impulse, resolved to block the other man's game, he places his own revolver in the desk drawer and pockets the other. Again hides.*)

MRS. BELDEN (*entering with a small tray*): "Why, you lazy thing, Frank! You haven't set the table! I've got a lovly supper. Found a bottle of Sauterne too!"

(*Conway gets a little table from the side of the room and brings it in front of fire. She stoops over, arranging things on table. Standing behind her, he bends over and kisses her bare shoulder, his hands running the length of her arms caressingly. She turns about, confronting him in amazement.*)

CONWAY: "Oh—come, Eileen! My kiss wasn't that unpleasant!"

(*Reluctant to believe evil of her husband's nephew she attempts to laugh the matter off—shrugging her shoulders.*)

MRS. BELDEN: "Really—now! Is that your way of thanking ladies for bringing you a tempting repast? Come, I'm starving! Doesn't it look good?"

(*She sits down at table and begins to serve. He opens the bottle and fills glasses, drinking his own down at a gulp—all the time observing her, his face distorted with ugly thoughts. He walks around the table, captures her hands, and encircles her with his arm, his lips at her cheek. She springs up, attempting to release herself, furious.*)

"Frank! Are you mad?"

CONWAY (*struggling with her, trying to kiss her lips*): "Very—nearly. You always—go to my head!"

(*She tears loose from him, backing away, but still unable to believe the worst of him.*)

MRS. BELDEN: "If this is your idea—of playfulness—it's not—mine!"

(*He pursues her, catching her in his arms, and this time holding her close and raining kisses upon her face in spite of her frantic struggles.*)

CONWAY: "We are all alone—all alone. Don't—"

(*Wildly she breaks away and, now genuinely alarmed, runs toward the phone, but he is on the alert and intercepts her. She casts her eyes about frantically for some means of defense.*)

MRS. BELDEN: "Don't you dare to—come near me! I—"

(*She suddenly remembers the revolver in the drawer, and runs to the desk, seizes the weapon, and levels it at him as he advances.*) "Don't come a step—nearer! I'll shoot! You're out of your senses!"

CONWAY (*coming toward her*): "Shoot away! I'd go through fire any time to—get you. I mean to have—you! Now—now—I've always been mad about you—always mad—"

MRS. BELDEN (*still backing away from him around the room*): "Frank! Don't—force me to kill—you!"

(*She stumbles backward against the wall, and he, with a little laugh of triumph, is about to seize her when she fires. He throws up his hands, an expression of almost ludricious amazement coming over his face—for he had thought the revolver unloaded. He staggers, and sinks to the floor. The revolver drops from her nerveless fingers, and she falls fainting.*)

(*The burglar peeps out, then comes forth, quickly rifles Conway's pockets, and gives the limp form a vicious kick. Then he starts toward Mrs. Belden, and stands for a moment looking down at her jewels. But some faint instinct of chivalry, long dormant, is struggling within him. He can't bring himself to take them. She put up a game fight with that yellow dog! He looks at her a second, then quickly exits through window.*)

(*There is a movement behind the other curtain. The butler, aroused by the shot, wriggles out onto the floor and manages, with difficulty, to get out of his bonds. He stands up, feeling his bruised head. Then his eyes encounter with horror the prostrate forms of Conway and his mistress. He kneels beside Conway, feeling his heart. There is a faint flutter. He lifts him to a sitting posture.*)

CONWAY (*opening his eyes weakly*): "Lawson, say—a burglar—shot me. A burglar! Y' understand?"

LAWSON: "Why, yes, sir! Of course, sir! Of course it was a burglar!"

(*A slight smile passes over Conway's face as his head sinks back and his eyes close. Lawson lays him down, then goes over to his mistress, picks her up, and places her on a couch. Then he goes to the phone as if to summon help.*)

CURTAIN

From time to time, as we can secure plays worth while, we shall publish them in MIDNIGHT. But, since MIDNIGHT purchases the right of publication in this magazine only, we must caution our readers against performing "Thieves," or any other play appearing in these pages, without first securing the permission of the author or authors. A letter to any author whose work is represented in MIDNIGHT may be addressed in care of MIDNIGHT and it will be promptly forwarded.

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Why Rich Men Won't Pay Their Bills

by A Creditor

Most rich men pay their bills—but here are a few incidents typical of the attitude many a man of wealth adopts toward his creditors.

THE question now before the house is this: Has one of America's richest women $78.41?

Not much, is it, as money goes nowadays? But a prominent Fifth Avenue firm has sued her for this amount of money and taken out a judgment against her.

We do not know why she permitted that $78.41 bill to lag or why she didn't pay it before judgment was taken. Doubtless she has her reasons.

But we do know that the rich are tough customers when it comes to paying their bills.

A certain Fifth Avenue tailor, whose name I shall not mention for obvious reasons, sold a suit of clothes to one of America's wealthiest men just before the great war started in 1914. The suit cost $150.

A bill was sent with the suit and then, the first day of the month following a statement was mailed. Since then on the first day of every month a statement has been sent, but the wealthy debtor pays no more attention to these polite little missives than you would pay to a letter giving the price of garlic in Siberia.

"Oh, he will pay me some day," the tailor shrugs his shoulders. "I do not worry—much."

"Why don't you sue him and get a judgment?' we asked naively.

"Oh, Mon Dieu!" the tailor rolled his eyes, "it is true that I might get a judgment and that he might pay then more quickly. But when my customers see in the paper that I take out a judgment, they get frightened. They do not buy from me. No, I wait. After all, I do not have many bills out so long."

A prominent motor car manufacturer in Detroit, whose name is a household word, ordered a shipment of Japanese dwarf trees from a certain landscape gardener in New York, and the shipment was to be sent New York, F. O. B. Certainly a motor car manufacturer should know the meaning of F. O. B. It means that he has to pay the carriage charges. BUT, though the amount was only $8.00 and the matter has been standing more than two years, he has never remitted. The chances are that he never will.

A millionaire who thinks nothing of paying a half million dollars for a painting or a piece of statuary will hang up his grocer five years for a bill of a hundred dollars.

An amusing instance of this kind happened several years ago when a prominent grocery house got worried about a gradually growing bill owed them by a man of undisputed means. For a year and a half they had been delivering groceries at his back door and for a year and a half they been hadn't paid a cent. The bill climbed to $9,000.00, so they thought something should be done about it as they needed ready money badly.

That wasn't the only long-standing bill they had on their books, either.

Letters, personal calls, phone calls, had no effect.

No answers, not in, in conference and out-of-town was all that was elicited in the form of information to all their inquiries. But they had to keep on delivering groceries for fear of losing the whole amount of the bill if the patron got too indignant.

At last they had an idea.

The millionaire was to give a big dinner at his Fifth Avenue mansion. The firm supplied the groceries. It was an exceptionally large order.

The night of the dinner one of the guests found a slip of paper in a pastry. He opened it up curiously and found this typewritten: "Please ask your host why he doesn't pay his grocery bill of $9,000." That was all. Other guests began finding such slips in their pastries. Even the host got one. He paid the next day.

A member of New York's four hundred was walking up Fifth Avenue one day when a rug in a window caught his fancy. He inquired the price. It was $2,500. He ordered it sent to his home. It was sent.

The next day when the boss came in he was told of the sale by the clerk who had made it and expected to be praised. The boss was pleased until he found that the man had ordered it charged.

"I know him," the boss said gloomily. "He will pay, but maybe not in my lifetime nor yours. So I shall teach you a lesson. Each month that rug remains unpaid for, I shall deduct from your salary. The first month five dollars, the next ten, the next fifteen, and so on. When the bill is paid, I give you back your money.

"At the end of the fifth month the clerk got desperate. He tried every means within his power to get the bill paid. But it was no use.

Another month passed.

And another.

Rendered almost insane by this time, the clerk forced his way into the man's palatial home, located the rug in a music room, rolled it up and started away with it. He got to the sidewalk before he was apprehended.

(*Continued on Page* 30)

Many a rich man who thinks nothing of buying trinkets like these will hang up his tailor for a year. The piece above is valued at $20,000; the branch of wild roses in emeralds, pink tourmalines and diamonds at the left is valued at $80,000.

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Women Who Walk The Streets

(*Continued from Page 14*)

"I know the journalists," she said, "because they always look tired."

THE newspaper woman is going home after a hard day. She thinks well or ill of her occupation according to what turn the stream of events had taken that day. If she "got her story" journalism is a noble profession. If she "fell down on her story" she has definitely decided that she would rather be a laundress. The work is cleaner, she concludes, more satisfying and nearly as well paid.

One penalty of the work is that she is nearly always alone. Her neighbors call her "Lonesome Peggy." The better newspaperwoman she is the more thoroughly she understands that she must hunt her story, or the subject of her interview without aid. She is nothing if not a psychologue. She knows the thoughts that flow to the lips at sight of a sympathetic listener may be checked by the presence of two such listeners. So she is always going to, or coming from, some place alone.

One of the number married a millionaire. But it was because he followed her from place to place, not that he was permitted to attend her. At last he locked the door of his office and said he would not unlock it until she promised to marry him.

"Yes," she gasped. "Unlock the door first and I will tell you why."

The door was unlocked. She sobbed as she felt his protecting arm enclose her.

"I am glad to marry you," she sighed. "If only to show what I thought was false. When I used to run about at night from pillar to post alone I thought 'And the worst of it is that nobody cares.' "

That girl in the dark tailored suit and the simple little turban is a chorus girl. Fact. I saw her issue from the Casino door with eight other girls. I counted them. All plainly dressed. All went their several ways alone. Follow that one for a few blocks. She will not go to a cabaret.

She will stop at the delicatessen. Her purchases are a salami sandwich and a bottle of milk. Girls who sing or dance in the ensemble prefer salami sandwiches. This for their nourishing quality. Gilda Grey, who invented the shimmy dance and earns $1,500 a week by dancing at the Ziegfeld Follies, and afterwards at the Picadilly Rendezvous, told me that she and her dancing partner, another frightened western girl, spent their last quarter for a salami sandwich. Each ate half of the sandwich. It was to have been their last food on earth. They hoped that there would be food of a substantial nature in heaven. For they had resolved to commit suicide.

I waited one night at the door of the Casino for Ada Lewis. She and I were invited to an after-theatre party. The principals of the company came out and stepped into their own cars or into taxicabs. Half the chorus girls who poured forth in changed habiliments were met by young men with high hats and receding chins. They handed them into taxicabs or six thousand dollar limousines. But half of them walked home alone. We were seeing the other side of the shield.

"It's that way," observed Miss Lewis sententiously, "chorus girls, marriage, business, everything in life, a fifty-fifty proposition."

HERE comes a trim, tired-looking girl. She is a stenographer who has been working late at the office.

"A bad thing, this working late at the office," said Gail Kane to me. Miss Kane was an office girl herself until Augustus Thomas visted the office, noted her beauty and exquisite modulation and imported her to stageland. "The temptations of the stage are as nothing compared with those of the stenographer who works overtime at the office. She should not work after hours. Her employer should not ask her to remain in the office after five o'clock."

Two girls pass each other at the door of a sky-scraper. They nod, smile, and hurry on, one into the street, one whose work at the switchboard is finished, the other who will slip the metal hood about her curls, and begin her eight-hour-long series of "Number, please." At midnight the home-going girl issues unafraid from the great stone pile and makes her usually unmolested way home. Her air of going somewhere, and in a hurry, disarms the male flirt who passes her and casts toward her an inquiring eye. She is pretty and winsome, but her glacial indifference is a sling that slays the Goliath of amorousness.

Here and there a young woman, gowned in the latest mode, walks Fifth Avenue. She lingers before the shop windows. She is taking mental notes. She is a dressmaker. She will copy the modes.

Two young women stop on the corner and exchange good-byes. One is taking the northbound car, the other the crosstown. Comely, well-dressed young women they are with a capable and self-sufficient air. Each carries a theatre programme in her hand. Each studies it on her separate car. They are bachelor girls, business women, who have seen a play together. That no man has presented himself as escort is unimportant to them. They are able and willing to pay for seats at the play-house. They have dined together, either at the apartment of one or the boarding house of the other. Or at a French or Italian table d'hote.

A mourning-eyed widow from the Pacific Coast came to New York to work and to live.

"The city oppresses me," she wrote to a friend at the Golden Gate. "It is a city of lonely women."

"Lonely!" laughed the New Yorker who was visiting the woman who received the letter. "Alone but not lonely. To the single woman New York is the blessed isle. It is the paradise of the unmarried. The business or professional woman has her flat, her latchkey and her freedom. She is as proud of them as a boy with his first pair of boots."

From the back door of one of the houses with the white front and huge windows issues a group of strongly built young women. The day and the night shift of a popular-priced restaurant are exchanging places. The cashier, a taller and slighter girl, overtakes them.

"Hello, Maud! Why the book under your arm?"

"I always carry a book at night," answers Maud. "It keeps the mashers away. Makes 'em think you're literary. A man may like butter cakes or he may not, but no man likes a literary woman. If he doesn't notice the book because he is short-sighted or fresh you can bring it down on his head. He'll see stars that never were in the sky."

THERE is another woman who may be seen on the streets of the metropolis by night. She is of the plain clothes staff, a policewoman whose star of authority is secreted beneath her neatly fitting coat. She is there to protect other women. Her specialty is to patrol the park environs.

A dozen types or more of women who walk the streets of the metropolis by night! Workers going about their beneficent business and moths on their way to death

The Hotel Switchboard Girl

(*Continued from Page 20*)

He hustled off, and I guess he caught her coming through the gate. Shortly after that I saw the man in the lobby talking to a very pretty woman. She showed just the natural degree of surprise and pleasure at seeing him. They sat down and visited together for a few minutes and then left the hotel.

As they were leaving by one door, the other chap came in at another. He came over and leaned an elbow on the rail beside me.

"Gee, that was a close one," he said, taking off his straw hat and mopping his brow. "You did me a big favor, little one, and I appreciate it."

"*You* a favor! Say, where do you get your conceit? I was doing her a favor and him. I would have let him chew you up right out there on the rug if I could have managed it without getting her in wrong. You had better keep your hands inside the car. The only trouble with her husband is that he worries too much about business. But from what I just saw over there in the lobby, he is going to take the time to notice her in the future."

I gave all my attention to the board, and he walked away.

And that's the way it goes. Once in a while I get a little thrill and a flurry of excitement, just often enough to keep from getting bored to death with the routine. But it is nothing like what it used to be when the politicians and race-track touts used to cluster around the cuspidors, and Floradora was being revived for the first time, and the permanent guest in 201 used to set fire to the bed once or twice a month.

"Alone at midnight, with a great sum of money in the house, the woman waited, tense with anxiety and fear. Suddenly the door knob moved!" This is from "OUT OF THE NIGHT" a great short story to be published in next week's MIDNIGHT

Shame's Auction Block

(*Continued from Page 18*)

lying on some sort of a lounge—a divan, most likely,—and from toes to armpits I was wrapped in the heavy covering of a red portière. Only my bare arms and shoulders were visible.

Once more I glanced around the room. I was alone, except for the youth, who was adjusting a pillow beneath my head.

"Where——are——the——"

Duane's face flamed.

"The damn' curs! I drove them out of here like I'd drive a pack of coyotes! I'll beat it, myself, for awhile, as soon as you feel strong enough to dress."

"Dress?" I echoed, "Why, I thought——"

"You don't think for a minute, do you, that after what happened I'd allow you to accept a penny of their dirty money! I'll admit I was to blame for allowing it, in the first place; but, honestly, I thought it was just another of Paine's freak ideas for a 'good time.' I never dreamed you were in earnest! If I'd known—if I'd thought Murchison was such a skunk, I'd have taken you back to the river and thrown you in with my own hands! There, I suppose I sound like the hero in some cheap melodrama. When a girl is as white clean through—and as game—as you were, any chap with any sense of decency would see she got a square deal. On the level, I don't think even Paine realized what he was letting you in for. Your clothes are over there on the chair,—that is, all but the shoes. I insist on keeping those as a souvenir of the occasion. As soon as it's morning, I'll see that you get another pair."

"I had propped myself up on an elbow, while I listened. Now, my face bloodless, I sank back to the pillow.

"Morning? You mean I must stay with you—here—all night—alone?"

Duane leaned over me. His hands gripped my bare shoulders so tightly I winced at the pain.

"Good God! You don't think I mean——"

I laughed mirthlessly.

"It isn't so much what you mean—or do—as what other people will think—and say. It was bad enough, last night, God knows, but now,——" my voice broke, I choked back a sob.

He slipped an arm under my head, once more, and pulled me towards him. His voice was hoarse with suppressed emotion.

"Listen to me! There's still a way of escape for you. I've met hundreds of girls, but none of them have ever hit me quite so hard as you have. Maybe you'll think I'm crazy. Maybe you'll think I'm not capable of holding down the job. Why not—— Damn it all, I don't know how to say it! Why not let me take care of you for the rest of your life? I've nothing to hold me here. I can paint as well one place as another. We can even go back to your home town, if you want to. And with you; my little wife for my inspiration——"

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Daughter of a Murderer

A Four Part Serial by John W. Grey

The Story of a Daughter's Struggle to Rise From the Depths

Synopsis

The girl who tells the story was born into a life of squalor in New York, the eldest of three children. Her mother died when she was very young, leaving her with the care of her two little sisters. Her father was a worthless criminal and parasite, who lived upon her earnings, his days and his nights sunk in drink, degradation and evil companions. He was at last sentenced to the electric chair for a brutal murder and executed, leaving her and her sisters outcasts even in the low neighborhood in which they managed to exist. They moved. They found it impossible to live on the eight dollars per week the girl received as shipping clerk in a large department store, so, driven by destitution, she became a thief.

YOU will never understand just how much truth and wisdom there is in that old saying "necessity knows no law" until you've suffered and starved. I know what I'm talking about for I've plumbed the depths of life and sounded the heights. I've been down and I've been up. I've been maddened and tortured by want and I've lolled upon the soft bed of luxury and ease!

After I had paid the rent out of the miserly wage that I was receiving at the store I didn't have enough money left for my carfare to and from work. I was always half fed and half clothed and at no time did I ever have enough money to see the inside of a theatre, never able to partake of any of the simple luxuries that are essential to the preservation of a normal healthy life, never a cent left to satisfy those cravings for pleasure that make youth bitter and hideous.

Then it dawned upon me that there was a way by which I might be able to solve my problem and thus get away from becoming a criminal. The way out was another job with a little more money, just a few dollars a week more would enable me to make both ends meet so I went to the manager and asked him to give me a bigger job, being convinced that if he did that he would surely give me more money. He gave me the job all right, but not the money. He sent me into the cashier's cage to work as a cashier.

I shall never forget the feeling that came over me the first day that I worked in that cage. The money attracted me like the flame attracts the moth. All around me were huge piles of money. I was amazed, bewildered, fascinated, stunned! I never thought that there was so much money in the world and I just looked and dreamt of all the things that my heart was hungering for, food and clothes for myself and my two little sisters and a luxury or two to break the monotonous grind of poverty. A sudden flutter came into my heart, a strange trembling along the fine courses of my veins. I touched a pile of the money. It had an extraordinary feel to my fingers. My tactile sense became exaggerated. Those bills were silken, amorous, alive! They felt like the skin of a nubile woman under the fingers of her lover. I clutched them to me, I pawed over them and played with them like a cat plays with a mouse and then I took one from the pile, just one no more, a dollar bill.

I stole a dollar every night before I went home and that dollar lifted us out of the old world of hunger and want into a new sphere. There was no longer the constant looking up and reaching out into space, life seemed to take on a new color. We had a piece of steak occasionally, we could go to the theatre once in a while and of a Sunday we could go to Coney Island or Brighton for an outing. I loved to read so I could buy a book now and then, everything was different with that extra dollar a day.

I had no confidants. I never told anybody that I was stealing, not even my sisters. When I went to confession I didn't tell the priest. I lied to him for I recall his asking me several times if I had ever broken the seventh commandment. I was a happy kid, at least I thought I was, but it never occurred to me that I would be caught if I kept on with my thefts. I thought they would never miss a dollar a day out of all that money. Penalty and consequence had never entered my mind. I just stole and lived and hoped for the dawn of a better day.

And then like a bolt of lightning out of the blue there came the inevitable end. I was caught stealing, caught with the money in my possession, trapped by the detectives.

RIGHT here words fail me—I cannot begin to tell you how I felt when the detectives arrested me and found the dollar in my stocking. The first thing that I thought of was my two little sisters. I was more concerned about them than I was about whatever might happen to me. I knew that they would have to suffer innocently for my transgressions and I was sad!

The detectives ushered me into the manager's office with the money that they found in my stocking.

"Ha, ha," he laughed when they dragged me into his office. "Well—so you are the young lady that has been stealing our money, eh?"

"Caught her with the goods, boss," one of the detectives spoke.

"How much did she have?"

"Here it is—a dollar," he exclained as he handed it over to the manager.

"Got any more?" the manager asked me.

"No sir, I haven't got any more. I only took a dollar."

"Call one of the female detectives and have her searched and then bring her back to me," the manager ordered.

I was screaming at the top of my voice when they led me out of his office. I was crushed and broken!

"Come on, come on," the detectives growled at me, "cut out that screaming, ya'll have everybody in the store looking at ya."

When they got me up in that private office on the fifth floor they shoved me in the door and shouted:

"Come on now, baby face, get those clothes off and cut out that dramatic stuff, that ain't going to get ya a thing."

I pleaded with them that I didn't have any more money. They answered my pleas with blows. They stripped me to the skin and searched every bit of clothing that I had on and when they failed to find any more money they were disappointed and enraged and began to taunt me with insulting remarks. Those women detectives were the hardest and the most despicable creatures that I've ever had anything to do with. The more I cried for sympathy and consideration the more they mocked me and to mock a soul in pain is a dreadful thing, the most abominable thing that a human being can be guilty of!

I was on the verge of collapsing when they led me back to the manager's office. I told him the story of my efforts to provide a home for myself and my sisters, told him all about my father having been electrocuted in Sing Sing, the death of my mother. I laid my life bare for him to look at and then he just said:

"Turn her over to the police."

IF there ever was a time in my life when I was in need of loving kindness, of compassion, of generosity and all the things divine in mankind it was that day that I stood there pleading for mercy with a broken heart and lips of pain! They wouldn't pay me enough to live decently and yet they expected me, a kid, to handle all that money and be honest. There I was an adolescent with all the fresh, untamed, unreasoning streams of strange substances cooking up in my ill-nourished body, with all the

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mysteries and all the madnesses of life jumbled before my dizzy eyes, ruled by the passions and appetites of youth looking, at piles and piles of money day in and day out and hungering for the things that it would buy!

WELL, I won't burden you with details. They sent me to prison to serve a term of thirty days and they committed my sisters to a home. I was sick and discouraged when I arrived at Blackwells Island. I was at the last ditch, tired of life, almost! But I soon learned that my troubles were only beginning, the hard road was yet to be travelled. I was soon to learn a thing or two about the unspeakable humiliations, the savage, barbarous cruelties and the rigid, inhumane discipline of society's "institutions of reform."

Of all the horrible places in the world Blackwells Island was the limit. First of all it was incredibly filthy, filled with vermin and rats and bed bugs and every other kind of pestilence that you can think of. I was thrown in with "prostitutes," thieves, the loathsome and diseased, thrown in with all the derelicts from the turbid stream of degenerate life. There were women young and old in the big cell that they put me in, women who had tramped Broadway for years as "hustlers," women who had been thieves for years, dope fiends, opium smokers, cocaine sniffers, heroin addicts and habitual drunkards. Swarming life in the midst of death!

Words fail me! If I were a Lord of language I couldn't begin to tell you, I couldn't possibly paint a word-picture of some of the experiences that I lived through in that atmosphere of crime and sin and wretched humanity. From that day to this I have never had any use, any tolerance, or sympathy for the prison as an instrument of reform. If the judge who sent me to Blackwells Island had known just what kind of an institution he was sending me to he might have hesitated before he pronounced sentence.

If anybody had told me that a girl my age could have been treated as I was treated I would not have believed them. The hardest and the most terribly inhumane women that I have ever had any human relationship with were the keepers and the attendants in that prison. When a woman finds a cruel strain in a man she sometimes takes it as a matter of course. We do not become alarmed about it, but when we find that one of our own sex is cold-blooded and cruel and absolutely devoid of all the soft, tender impulses and traits that make women stand out over men we are concerned and we begin to wonder.

They began to "stick the iron in my heart" just as soon as I entered the gates, the big battlemented gates that sent a chill up and down my spine when I heard them clang on me.

They cursed me for crying and threatened me with the "dark cell" if I "didn't cut out my squawking" and when I happened to wake up in the middle of the first night that I was in the prison screaming with terror, they unlocked the cell and amidst a stream of violent oaths they dragged me off to the dungeon. Oh God! such brutes were those women. They are infinitely harder and infinitely worse in every respect than the unfortunates that they were guarding! The "prostitues," the thieves and the dope fiends were much finer women in every way! Now please don't get the idea that I say these things because I'm bitter—because I'm not, for these women of the streets were really better women at heart than the prison attendants.

WELL, the fact that I was a kid didn't make any difference—no, not a bit. They didn't make any discrimination between me and the old, hardened offender. They labelled me "prostitute," "grifter," "hustler" and all the rest of the underworld terms, just as they did all the other inmates. When I protested against being called these names I was laughed at and cursed and if I was particularly persistent in my objections I went into the dungeon for twenty-four hours on bread and water. I soon learned that it was better for me to bow my head and bear all the epithets in silence. I saw that resistance or objection simply aggravated the beasts. Thereafter I bore all the goading indignities and said nothing and while they broke my heart they didn't succeed in breaking my spirit and the will to be. I tried to smile and I kept my face to the sun even though I was dumb with pain!

I said that I was thrown in with all the filth and all the scum from the turbid stream of degenerate life. Well, I'm glad that I was, even though I objected to it at first. Yes, I'm glad because my association with those unfortunate women taught me many things about life and sin that I would never have known. My association with the women of the streets broadened my view of life and my understanding of how to avoid the pitfalls that I was to come across in later years. These women of the street, dope fiends and thieves, were kind to me. Every one of them had that God-like and God-given maternalistic impulse. Every one with whom I came in contact said "poor kid," helped me to bear the burden and did what they could to comfort and cheer me. They pitied me and sympathized with me. They were "bad women," but they were nearer to Christ and the teachings of Christ than the beasts that guarded them!

One of the "prostitutes" that occupied the same cell with me was known as "Tough Mag." "Mag" had the reputation of being one of the "best hustlers that ever walked Broadway." She was only twenty-three when I arrived at the prison, but nevertheless she was serving her fifth term. She had been convicted twice for shoplifting, once for picking pockets and two times for street walking. She had been photographed and finger-printed and it was said that her picture was in every rogues gallery in the United States. Think of it, only twenty-three, practically a young girl and yet a hardened offender. She cursed and swore like a trooper and the first time that I ever heard her burst out in a tirade of profanity was the night that the keepers put me in the dungeon for crying. She abused them terribly for "putting me in the hole" and she called them everything that she could think of. They locked her up for five days on bread and water for her remarks in my behalf.

And yet this same woman never missed an opportunity to give me good advice, never missed an opportunity to say a kind word to me.

"Dear God—what a lot of monsters these women were, hard and coarse and as brutal as could be. The thirty days that I spent in that den of pain and iniquity were thirty of the longest days I've ever lived"

"Kid," she would say to me, "take a tip from an old timer, there isn't anything in the gay life, when y' get out of here go straight. Don't let anybody bull y' about the easy time that hustlers and grifters have—there ain't nothing to it, the square life is the only one. Live on the square and ya'l be happy. I've been in this game since I was fifteen and I wish that I had never been born, on the level I do, kid."

Later on before I left the prison I learned all about her history. She was one of a family of eight, the eldest one. Her mother had died when she was twelve. There hadn't been any love or sympathy in her life. Nobody to guide her or advise her, she was just another one of those unfortunates who had strayed from the flock who might have been saved from a life of shame if she had been sent to an institution for treatment instead of being caged up in a prison to be brutalized and dehumanized. Her father, she told me, was a professional burglar, known in the underworld of New York as "Jack Murphy." He was serving a life sentence in Dannemora for having killed a pal in a drunken brawl. "Tough Mag" is one of the finest women that I know today. She has come up from the abyss and I will tell you the story of her rehabilitation in another part of my narrative.

IF it had not been for "Tough Mag" I don't think I would have ever lived through my sentence. The thirty days that I spent in that den of pain and iniquity were thirty of the longest days that I've ever lived. The monotonous grind was paralyzing and It seemed that every day was harder than the one that had gone before. The keepers grew worse as time rolled on. They worked me from early morning until late at night in the big prison laundry, they worked me until my finger tips were dull with pain and every bone in my body ached. If I stopped to rest they cursed me and made me go on. Dear God—what a lot of monsters those women were, hard and coarse and as brutal as could be. When I went to my cell at night I could do nothing but think and wonder how one woman could be so cruel to another. I couldn't understand them, they were terrible, they seemed to take a delight in making it hard for me, in doing everything that they could to hurt me. Their primitive, brutal minds were dominated with the idea of punishment and they revelled in the suffering of the inmates!

Have you sent in your ending for the story we printed last week, "How I Entertained My Small Town Sweetheart in New York?" Every mail brings them in

And I used to look at these female keepers and marvel at their hypocrisy when they attended the services in the prison chapel every Sunday. They were as pious and as sanctimonious as could be, one would think that butter would not melt in their mouths. They sang the hymns and bowed their heads reverently in prayer and listened attentively to what the chaplain had to say.

I HAVE in mind one of the keepers in particular who was extremely cruel to me and some of the other inmates—Miss Riordan, "Hard boiled Kate" she was called. Every Sunday she occupied a chair right near the chaplain. Her face was always wreathed in smiles and she was continually nodding her head in approval of everything that the chaplain uttered. She was never known to have smiled on any other day but Sunday. To see her sitting there with the hymn book in her hand and singing as though the heart within her was bursting with religion one would never imagine that she was the fiend that she was and that she took a delight in abusing the inmates at every opportunity. Of all the hypocritical creatures that I've ever known—that woman was the limit!

The prison chaplain usually began his sermon by saying, "I'm glad to see you all here this beautiful Sunday morning." I could never understand why he persisted in beginning his sermon with a statement of that kind, but he was the most consistent man in the world and he never failed to start off with those remarks. He told us about the mercies of God, the salvation of our souls, the life beyond the grave and a lot of other things that were all right in their place, but fell upon deaf ears because nobody could reconcile them with the un-Christian-like attitude of the keepers. It always seemed to me that the religion of Paul or Moses would have been more in keeping with the prison since the prison itself was a positive, an absolute denial of everything that Jesus taught and died for and a living testimonial of the old Mosaic law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life." The prison was a symbol of revenge and a contradiction of everything that the gentle Nazarene stood for consequently nobody paid any attention to the chaplain.

THESE Sunday services, however, broke the soul-crushing monotony of the institution so everybody attended them, because everybody liked to sing, especially Miss Riordan! They didn't mean so very much to me because I was a Catholic and I never could see anything in any other faith. That is, I couldn't in those days. I'm a little broader now.

I thought that the prison was to be the last of my trials, the end of all my troubles, but I soon learned that it was only the beginning. The life in prison was nothing in comparison to what was yet to come, and of this I will have something to say in my next installment.

(To be continued)

"My Greatest Midnight Thrill." The contest is drawing to a close—better send in that thrill of yours while there is yet time.
See details on page 2

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Sold to the Devil

A Desperate Man's Pact With Satan

Read this astounding, soul-stirring story of a man's redemption, by the master of mysterious plots. He exceeds his best work in this gripping serial.

SYNOPSIS

JOSEPHUS MARBLE, a wealthy financier, saw a young man hiding something in a hole under the turf. He recovered it, and found it was a slip of paper on which was written: "I'll sell my soul to the Devil for fifty dollars. Everett Lane." Mr. Marble hunted Everett Lane up and found him a fine-looking young man of about twenty-five who had come to New York because James Walters, a New York magnate, had ruined his father, the ruin being practically responsible for his father's death. He hated Walters and intended to get revenge. Now he was destitute and hungry. Josephus Marble, who did not like Walters any too well himself, was interested. He helped the young man with money and clothes. Lane managed to become private secretary to Walters under the assumed name of Robert Street. In the line of his secretarial duties he came out with Walters to his Long Island home and there met Mrs. Walters, who hated her husband—as everybody did—and wormed his secret from him, promising to be his ally. He also met Beryl, Walter's daughter, and was greatly impressed by her young beauty. Walters unexpectedly returned and discovered his wife in a tete a tete with his new secretary.

"Here! This is the combination of that safe. Open it and give me the papers that are in that little drawer."

VI

WHEN Everett Lane looked into the mirror and saw Walters standing in the doorway, his face distorted with anger, he was overwhelmed with consternation. If the husband had heard the wife arranging to meet a young man in his rooms, what must he think? But had he heard? And if he had, what would he do? And what explanation could Lane make?

These thoughts passed through the young man's mind as he stared at the reflection in the mirror. Mrs. Walters, noting his rigid attitude looked up and saw her husband's reflection. She started, but recovered herself instantly and broke into a low, irritating laugh.

"Hello, Jim!" she called out, but without discontinuing her playing, "Been there long?"

Walters shook his head with the air of a lion shaking away an annoying gnat. "Street," he rumbled, "I want to see you in the library."

He strode away without waiting for any response. Mrs. Walters continued to play, but with a mocking smile on her lips, looked up at Lane, saying, "Do you think he heard?"

"I'll soon find out," he answered curtly, and turned from her and hurried out of the room. He had a sense of shame at the thought that he might be suspected of having tried to seduce his employer's wife, but his strongest emotion was one of anger at Mrs. Walters for the way she had trapped him into a situation that might end in wrecking the plans so carefully made by Josephus Marble for the humbling of Jim Walters. And added to this was disgust at himself for being trapped so easily.

Walters was half way down the hall when the young man reached the door of the music room. He followed him slowly. Walters was in the library, pacing the floor, when Lane entered it.

"Shut the door!" Walters growled.

The secretary did as he was bidden and then stood erect as if to show that he waited without fear for what was to come. Walters went up and down the length of the great room several times before he finally stopped and faced his secretary.

"I want to talk to you, Street," he said in his gruff way.

"Yes sir."

"Harkness is trustworthy and loyal, but he is getting old." As a matter of fact he was no older than Walters, himself, but was worn out. "You are capable and swift, and I may want you out here often."

"Yes sir," responded the secretary, seeing that the other had stopped as if expecting some word from him.

"That woman—my wife," went on Walters

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almost choking over the word, wife, "hates me. I might as well be plain with you. And I hate her. No doubt you know this much already. She tried to debauch Harkness, but couldn't. I suppose he was too much afraid of me."

"Yes sir," said the astonished young man, wondering where all this was leading to.

Walters studied him a few moments, evidently disliking to continue. "You don't seem to be afraid of me."

"I'm not," asserted Lane, drawing himself up a bit straighter, and setting his strong jaw.

"Huh!" grunted Walters. "Well, anyhow I like you. Just the same you've got to be careful. I'm a bad man to cross."

"It's useless to threaten me, Mr. Walters. I'll cross you if I have an occasion to."

Walters glowered at him, but his angry eyes were met by a cold gaze from the other. Walters snorted and took a turn up and down the room. "Don't you want to hold your position?" he demanded.

"Of course I do, but I won't truckle to you or any other man," Lane snapped back. "You have something to say to me. Why don't you say it?"

Walters gave vent to a short, grim laugh; then, "I will. I want to warn you against that woman. She'll try to use you against me. She'll have you falling in love with her. Oh, I know her. She's beautiful, but she's as cold as ice."

Lane's lip curled. "I'd never fall in love with her if she was the only woman on earth," he asserted.

"Maybe," growled Walters. "I fell in love with her, however. But I wouldn't let her wipe her feet on me; I wouldn't make her independent of me. So she turned on me."

Walters paused, but Lane said nothing because he didn't know what to say. Walters took another turn up and down the room but came back to his former position. "I suppose you are wondering why I say these things to you."

"A little; yes."

"Well, I've never discussed this matter with anyone else because there was no occasion to do so; but I could see, there in the music room, that she was setting out to entangle you in her web. She's a damned clever woman and would have you before you knew it. I made up my mind then to warn you. What was she saying to you when I came?"

The young man was taken aback by the abrupt question, and for a moment he didn't answer; then he spoke slowly: "Mr. Walters, if you expect my services as secretary to include playing the spy on your wife, you make a mistake. Ask her if you want to know what she said."

Walters looked for a second as if he was going to fly into a rage at the bold answer, but he instantly calmed down. "I guess you're right at that," he said. "After all, it takes a cur to be a spy. Well, you know the situation now. Are you going to be my man or hers?"

Lane laughed outright at that question. "I'll be no man's man," he declared. "I'll be your secretary if you want me. You've got to trust me or get rid of me. Suppose I said I would be her man, how long would you keep me? She's got you scared Mr. Walters, or you'd never ask me a question like that."

What response Walters would have made to that, Lane was not to know, for at that moment the door of the library was opened and Beryl came in. "Why, Daddy!" she exclaimed, "don't you know dinner is waiting? Come! It isn't fair to make poor Mr. Street work all the time."

"Come along, Street!" cried Walters, his face lighted up by the smile of adoration that seemed always ready for his daughter. "You may not suspect it, but this little girl is the real boss of this establishment."

Beryl laughed softly. "What he should say, Mr. Street is that I am the only one who isn't afraid of him. I know that his bark is worse than his bite."

What the secretary thought was that it would be very delightful to bite—very gently, of course—her red lips or round cheek. What he said was that he hadn't noticed that her father either barked at her or bit her.

"And," said Walters, "this young man, like you, isn't afraid of me, either, though I have barked at him and threatened to bite him."

Beryl wound her round, white arms about one of her father's. "He's the dearest old daddy in the world," she said lovingly. "I'm glad you're not afraid of him."

"Why should I be?" queried the young man. "The worst he can do is to discharge me."

"And instead of discharging him," said Walters with a meaning look at the other, "I am doubling his salary."

This statement made Lane at once happy and uncomfortable. Happy because it assured him the opportunity to see more of the adorable Beryl, and uncomfortable because it made his part of conspirator and spy so much the more difficult. It indicated that gruff Jim Walters believed him trustworthy; and it is not pleasant to deliberately betray a man who trusts you.

He felt a sudden and strong distaste for the part he was playing. And yet he could not see his way out. If he kept faith with Marble he must betray Walters. If he kept faith with Walters, he must betray Marble. He wished with all his heart he had never done that silly, spectacular thing of expressing his despondency by burying that absurd bit of paper on Riverside Drive.

Also, and this was particularly when he looked at Beryl, he wondered if revenge wasn't a rather poor excuse for playing the part of spy. He had scornfully repudiated the suggestion from Walters that he should in any way spy on Mrs. Walters. Why play spy for any reason? And would his high-minded father have approved? Spying might be a form of fighting but it was somehow a despicable form.

He had dropped behind Walters and Beryl as these thoughts came to him; and although his eyes dwelt delightedly on the lovely girl as she danced along the hall, clinging to her father's arm, he was not in the least conscious that his present repugnance to his task was in any way due to her.

It was with a distinct sense of relief that Lane discovered that Mrs. Walters was not dining with them. She was dining out, the butler announced, and had already gone. Lane was sure that a look of pleasure passed between Beryl and her father.

BEAUTY and DEATH

An article that will rock two hemispheres. There is a big surprise in this article —look for it!

In next week's MIDNIGHT

More than once the young man suppressed a smile as he thought of the amazement of Wall Street at the sight of the ruthless pirate of finance bandying jest with the light-hearted Beryl. It made him think of a ferocious grizzly bear frolicking with a child; for even in his sportive moments, Walters suggested the grim force that bore down all opposition.

In spite of the servants hovering about the dining-room, the meal was a delightful one; but later when the three of them went to the music room, it seemed to the young man that he had never passed such an enjoyable evening. Walters smoked his cigar, and Beryl and Lane played and sang.

The effect of it all on Lane was that when he had gone to his room he stood by his open window and went over the whole situation; and the result of his reflections could best be summed up in the few words he spoke half aloud as he turned away to undress. "I can't see it through. I don't believe Dad would want me to."

* * * * *

V

EVERETT Lane was to discover that it was easier to come to such a determination than it was to live up to it.

Although the next day was Sunday, he expected to work and he did work. Walters dictated all the morning, and the afternoon was set aside for typing the letters and papers taken down in the morning.

He saw nothing of Mrs. Walters in the morning, but when in the afternoon Beryl coaxed her father out for a ride, and he was alone in the office back of the library, she came in.

"Good day, Mr. Hard-working-secretary!" she said gaily.

"Good day!" he responded, curtly enough, wishing her a thousand miles away.

"In a bad temper?" she queried, with a bright smile. "I don't blame you. Jim's a regular slave driver."

"I expected to work when I came down here." He had never been angry with a woman before, and didn't quite know how to act.

She studied him a moment, considering how to treat her refractory ally. She was unused to being treated as he was treating her; he was actually going on with his typing.

"Don't you think, Mr. Lane——" emphasizing his name—"that you'd be wiser to be more polite to me?"

He stopped work and faced her squarely, his under jaw thrust out the least bit. "I don't mean to be impolite," he said, "but I'm going to be frank with you. I have decided to have no part in your schemes."

The change that came over her beautiful face was startling. The eyes narrowed, the reddened lips pressed tightly together and the whole head inclined slightly forward, giving the impression of a snake about to strike.

"Is it so," she hissed. "You'll change your mind then. Don't forget that I know your secret. You will do just as I tell you. Do you imagine I will let myself be thwarted by a boy like you? Here!" She thrust her hand out and showed him a paper lying on her palm. "This is the combination of that safe. Open it and give me the papers that are in the little drawer."

He stared at her in amazement. Was the woman out of her head that she believed she could make him do such a thing? It seemed ages ago that he had been wondering how the safe could be opened, yet he shuddered as he recalled that he had once been of a mind to try to open it so that he might examine the contents, searching for the contract that had been stolen from his father.

It had seemed right enough then—a mere act of retaliatory justice. But now, and put in that crude, blunt way, it seemed to him not only criminal but infamous.

"I thought you were a clever woman, Mrs. Walters," he said. "I had the idea that it was by sheer wit that you had discovered me. I see now that it was luck. You can't compel me to do anything; certainly not a thing like this. If you think it advisable to betray me to Mr. Walters, do so. I am no more afraid of him than I am of you."

The passion faded from her face as she listened, and by slow degrees she withdrew her outstretched hand, crushing the paper in her fist. She realized that she had made a mistake; and at the same time her admiration for this bold, upstanding young man grew. He wasn't afraid, he couldn't be coerced; all the more did she desire him for an ally in her war against her husband.

Her change from anger to smiling cajolery was almost instantaneous. "Oh, I'm not clever," she said, laughing softly. "Anyhow I'm not clever enough for you. You are as keen as you are handsome. I couldn't say more than that, could I?"

He didn't relax from his aloof, cool manner. "I may be both handsome and keen," he responded quietly. "I don't think, however, that my looks enter into the matter. And I shall be satisfied if I am keen enough to keep clear of troublesome entanglements."

"Don't be angry with me," she pleaded with such an engaging air of contrition that it was hard to believe she was the same woman who was so venomously threatening him but a moment before. "I admit I am only a foolish woman. I am a deeply wronged one, however, and I can't stop at anything that will gain my end."

"I have no wish to interfere with you," he said, "but I have decided to go my way alone."

"But we could accomplish so much more together," she pleaded.

"That might be, Mrs. Walters, but our ways are not the same."

"The papers in there would help you as well as me," she urged.

"Don't you know it would be a criminal act for me to open that safe? I could be imprisoned for it. If I were willing to do it, yet I would not take the risk."

"He would be powerless to do anything if you had those papers."

"Do you know then what the papers are?" he asked.

"I know that he sets a high value on them, and that he is so anxious that no one should see them that he keeps them here instead of at the office. He admitted that much to me."

The young man smiled. "Why don't you open the safe, yourself? You have the combination, and you have every opportunity during the day when he is in the city."

(*Continued on Page 30*)

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Murder in the Name of the Law

(*Continued from page* 9)

up against the dark brown skin of his body and then just before the "official killer" reached up to get a hold on the wire that was dangling from the ceiling and connect it with the steel cap that was to be fitted over Boddy's head, the young negro said "Goodbye Doc" to Doctor Squires the prison physician. In another instant the "official killer" had this snake-like looking piece of wire in his hand and connected up with the cap on the top of the victim's head. And then over this chamber of death there fell a sickening suspense. Time lagged and hung. It seemed to me that Time itself was standing still. It seemed to me that the seconds were expanding into hours; the minutes into eternities of suspense while the "official killer" was adjusting the cap with its dripping sponge over the head and face of Boddy.

BODDY'S legs were shaking. His hands that hung carelessly over the ends of the arm rests of the chair were jumping up and down like the hand of a dope fiend who had gone mad for drugs. The minister continued to monotone the last requiem. He held the bible in his outstretched hands, but I noticed that he had one eye on the "official killer" as he recited the Gospel of Saint Luke. Suddenly one of the officials gave the signal to throw on the switch. The voice of the minister throbbed with emotion, but the "official killer" who was standing at the switch board didn't get the signal. The man who gave it raised his hand in the air again and brought it down with a violent sweep and then the switch was thrown on with a crash.

Instantaneously Boddy's hands doubled up in a knot. The veins slowly began to swell to an enormous size until I thought that they would surely burst and I would be drenched with blood. His body straightened up in the chair, the perspiration was fairly rushing out of the pores of his skin. The current was cooking his insides alive and the noise of the terrible, damnable thing reminded me of a roast of beef in a hot oven. It sizzled and crackled and spat, roared and hummed as its two thousand volts and fourteen amperes went crashing and smashing through the body of this young negro blasting the life out of him, paralyzing his heart, paralyzing the entire nervous and mental system, creating what the doctors call hermolysis or in other words complete disintegration of the blood corpuscles.

As I looked at him and listened to the current sizzling, a wave of indignation swept over me and I was on the verge of crying out, "Stop, for God's sake, stop! you're cooking the man alive." An ague of stupefaction dominated me from the top of my brain to the bottoms of my shaking feet! The beats of my heart were coming wider and wider apart until I thought that it would stop altogether. I was as dumb with terror as Boddy was when he entered the execution chamber!

For about twenty seconds the current plunged through his body and when it was cut off I heaved a sign of relief as a witness at my left gasped, "Jesus, this is terrible." A witness on the bench directly in front of me fainted, horror was written on the faces of most of the others; it was the most revolting sight that I had ever looked at!

Two big keepers moved over to the chair and unloosened the straps around Boddy's chest. One of them picked up a towel and wiped the streams of perspiration from Boddy's chest and the saliva that poured out of his mouth in torrents. The doctor then applied the stethoscope to his ear and listened. The heart was still beating, at least I presume it was, for they buckled him up again, stepped back and gave the signal to turn on the current once more.

Once again the "official killer" rammed the switch in and then almost instantaneously Boddy's body convulsed as if with a super human effort he was trying to struggle out of the chair. His body jumped more on this second charge than it did on the first one because he was waiting for the first one, his body was rigid then, full of life and resistance. He was dead when the second one was turned on him, or so near death that he wasn't capable of resisting, so the semi-lifeless body was almost shocked out of the chair when the "juice" was shot through him the second time. The straps groaned and screeched, the chair creaked under the strain while the murderous current was plunging through him. For about ten seconds it sizzled and hissed and spat and crackled, roared and hummed. One of the doctors who stood in front of the chair holding a watch then gave the signal and the "juice" was cut off. Once again they unloosened the straps, wiped off the chest and applied the stethoscope and then the doctor turned, faced the witnesses and said in a perfectly unconcerned, matter-of-fact tone:

"I pronounce this man dead."

The keepers then proceeded to loosen all the straps. The "official killer" moved over from the switch board to the back of the chair and started to disconnect the wire that dangled from the ceiling above and was hooked up with the cap on Boddy's head. When he finally got the cap off, Dear God! what a face I saw! If I were a Lord of language I couldn't begin to paint a word picture of it; a word picture that would enable you to visualize it; there aren't any words in English descriptive enough for that; the best that I can do is to hit the high spots and leave the rest to your imagination.

FIRST of all there was agony, the most excruciating agonizing expression that I've ever seen on the face of a human being. The jugular veins on each side of his neck were doubled and twisted up in knots and so were the muscles and the ligaments. The neck was swollen to a huge, unhuman size and both sides of it were burned. His head was resting limply on his right shoulder, his tongue was sticking out of the corner of his mouth and the saliva was still oozing out of the corner of his mouth. His temperature was one hundred and thirty seven degrees fahrenheit! Think of it one hundred and thirty-seven degrees fahrenheit; scorched and blistered to death by the lightning of legal justice!

The law had inflicted its penalty! Bloody human justice had been satisfied!

From the autopsy room, in the rear of the chair, which was separated from the execution chamber by a six foot wooden partition came two men in white. They picked up the lifeless body of the young negro, tossed it on a wheeled table and away they went with it to the room in the rear.

Then they got ready for the next victim Herbert Smith, the young white man. The same big keeper that had brought Boddy into the chamber of death tip-toed over to the door again to get Smith. Noiselessly he unlocked the door and noiselessly he pulled it open and with the same stealthy, cat-like tread he went down the steps and into the cells of the doomed for the other human soul that the chair was yawning for.

The same keeper who stood by the door peering through the crack waiting for Boddy now stood there peering through the door waiting for Herbert Smith. All eyes were riveted on the big white door again and the same death like suspense prevailed. In a moment I heard the jingle of keys and the tell tale of shuffling feet and the same valedictory that Boddy uttered, "Good-bye boys," and then the reply of the now startled and fear crazed inmates of "Good-bye Smith." The man at the door went through the same movements, opening it a little at a time, with his left foot propped up against the bottom of the door and the right hand resting on his hip pocket. The keepers stood there rigid as could be, eyes closed to slits, faces cold and hard and devoid of expression. I was sick at heart, nauseated. I raised my eyes just once and that was shortly before they adjusted the cap over the victim's face. I hung my head, as did many others who had come to see these two men killed. In a few seconds I heard the current sizzling, hissing and cracking, roaring and humming and then in another minute I heard the same unconcerned, matter of fact tone:

"I pronounce this man dead."

The "killing party" was all over. Within ten minutes two human beings had been shocked over the border into the unwaking night and the grave. Within those ten, swift terrible minutes, every one a minute of horror and terror, two human beings had had their lives blasted out of their bodies by the fangs of fire of the electric chair! Bloody human justice had been satisfied again!

All the elctric chairs in the world will not stop men from killing when the beast in them rises to the surface and predominates. All the prisons in the world will not stop men from stealing and if the police, the prison keepers, the judges, the prosecuting attorneys and the various other folks who go to make up the thing called the protective forces of Society had only been as much concerned about what Luther Boddy and Herbert Smith had been reading BEFORE they landed in the death house at Sing Sing as they were AFTER they had landed there it is not at all improbable to assume that they might have been real good citizens instead of killers. They might have never tasted the unholy sacrament of fire in the electric chair at Sing Sing!

SOCIETY never concerned itself about these two derelicts until they had committed a crime and then it gave both of them more attention and more care than they had ever had in their lives before! Such is the intolerable stupidity of Society!

In conclusion I want to say this: I went to Sing Sing as an advocate of capital punishment and I left with the deep rooted conviction that Society is unspeakably more barbaric, infinitely more brutal and infinitely more vicious than the worst murder that ever drew the breath of life!

"Thou shalt not kill," is the commandment of God. Who gave us the right to kill? And is not murder by law an example to murder outside of law?

Never have we read a story as convincing in its utter truthful ugliness as this. Never before has the truth, stripped bare of its embellishments, been told about the executions up at Sing Sing with the force and vigor that the author employs. This is not a pretty story, but it will hold you in the vise of breathless interest

Back numbers of MIDNIGHT may be had from the publisher at 10 cents a copy

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Why I Kissed Jack Dempsey

(*Continued from Page* 19)

"I seem destined to get into trouble through photographs," she laughed. "You may recall that photograph that was published broadcast, showing Fred Beauvais and me standing side by side, in much the attitude of the village belle and her beau. I was too amused to be angry when I saw that reproduction. It was too absurd.

"I was playing in Montreal and was having luncheon at the Windsor with a party of friends. As we entered the lobby of the hotel after lunch, one of the gentlemen in our party pointed out Fred Beauvais coming toward us.

"WHEN we met, the gentleman introduced Beauvais and we stood talking. I have Indian blood myself. My father was the descendant of a Sioux chief. Naturally, Beauvais was a more or less interesting figure to me, so I was glad of the chance to talk to him.

"Some one in the lobby took the opportunity of getting a photograph of our group and I myself have a copy of the photograph as it was taken at that time. But I have learned that there is nothing on earth capable of more deception and intrigue than a photograph—legally supposed to be irrefutable evidence of a situation.

"When I next saw that photograph, reproduced in the daily papers throughout Canada and the States, every member of that group had "stolen away" like the proverbial Arabs and their tents, and I and my "Indian guide" were apparently wrapt in admiration of each others conversational powers."

Perhaps Miss Walton inherits from her mother the famous Irish sense of humor, so that the episode of the photographs, while it has caused her no end of annoyance, has also amused her.

A girl who can, in a few short years, trip so lightly that she earns a salary of five thousand dollars a week, is not likely to be permanently cast down by a mere trifle like a misrepresenting photograph or two.

Besides, the charming young society dancer is a good sport. She gives credit to everybody, but herself, for her almost unprecedented success.

"I was a handicap to Maurice in those first days of our dancing partnership," she declared. "He was an artist, beloved of Paris. I was quite inexperienced. Of course I could dance, but I am sure that if Maurice could have had some one who was as great an artist as himself it would have made everything much easier for him."

Ziegfeld, too, comes in for much praise and gratitude from Miss Walton.

"He gave me every chance," she says appreciatively. I couldn't help making good."

And yet it is rumored that Maurice has not been the riot he was formerly before he and his attractive partner decided to work out their destinies apart.

Certainly Miss Walton has reached the stage in her popularity where she is herself the attraction. Her recent appearance at the Palace Theatre for example, was greeted with vociferous applause.

Despite the kissing episode, Miss Walton has the reputation of being extremely circumspect, very quiet, and almost conventional, in her habits of life. When I asked why she declares that she will never again yield to such a sudden impulse she voiced the enigmatical reply:

"Well, for one thing I don't think one ever repeats an incident that has in it no personal or romantic appeal."

"Why Men Leave Home!"
Next week's Midnight tells you

Each issue of MIDNIGHT contains a smashing, straight-from-the-shoulder editorial by Bernarr Macfadden. Read his "Man Talk" each week—you will be the better for it

Rich Men's Bills

(*Continued from page* 23)

Of course he was guilty of burglary, but when the judge heard the sad story, he suspended sentence on the man and advised him to enter a civil suit for the money. It wasn't necessary. The story got in the papers and the man paid the next day.

Another man who is famous for his wealth ran up a three hundred dollar cigar bill. For a year he paid no attention to it. Then he remitted his check for sixty dollars and gave three thirty, sixty and ninety day notes for $80 each for the balance. Can you beat that?

Another millionaire lately paid a forty-five dollar bill with a check dated thirty days ahead. The richest man in the world recently drew a check for six dollars that came back from the bank marked "No Funds." Instead of asking for another check, the creditor, who has a sense of humor, framed it and hung it above his desk.

You might well ask, "If the rich haven't got any money, who has?"

It isn't so much a question of money as it is *ready* money. A millionaire's wealth is usually in interest bearing stocks and bonds. He lives right up to the income they afford, and when, as frequently happens, he exceeds that income, he is flat broke.

And then the rich are careless.

They know they are "good for the money." You know it. So they can't see why you should worry whether they pay to-day, to-morrow, this year or next. It never occurs to them that you require cash to pay your executives, your clerks, your office help. They don't think that fast nor that far.

And one wealthy dilletante once informed me that his *custom* was worth so much to his trades-people that for the advertising it gave them they ought to wait on him for their bill until he got good and ready to pay it.

SOMETIMES, too, the rich are careless in keeping their personal accounts. They may not know that they owe you even though you send them a statement regularly. Their secretary opens their mail, giving them only what they think they want to see. And it doesn't take a competent secretary long to note the look of boredom that the sight of a bill affords their employer.

Which is not to say that every wealthy man or woman is "slow pay." Far from it. One millionaire I know is as meticulous about paying his personal bills as he is about keeping his commercial credit rating high. Every last one of his bills is paid promptly within ten or thirty days—and he takes advantage of all cash discounts, too. That's probably one reason why he is one of the richest men in the world.

Many tradesmen will tell you that it is among the F. F. V.'s of society that they experience the most difficulty. The self-made man, actively engaged in a business of his own, is the promptest payer among the rich. He knows business ethics better and is more jealous of his financial standing.

A rather cynical writer once summed up the situation in an epigram, "A snob makes an enemy of his valet and a friend of his tailor; a gentleman makes a friend of his valet and an enemy of his tailor."

All of which is no joke to the tradesman who wears out a case of "Please Remit" rubber stamps on a rich customer and gets his money only when it comes too late to save his business.

Sold to the Devil

(*Continued from Page* 28)

She had difficulty in retraining her annoyance. "There are two reasons. One is that he changes the combination every week, and I obtained possession of this only last night. It was on a blotter I found in his waste-paper basket. He will change the combination tonight or in the morning. The other reason is that I don't know how to work the combination. Please open the safe. I will take all the responsibility if he finds out."

He shook his head slowly. He saw how he would certainly be in her power if he did this thing; and he was not at all sure that such was not her purpose. In any case he had decided definitely not to resort to any such means to gain his end. He wondered how he could ever have contemplated doing so.

"Mrs. Walters," he said in a tone of finality, "you waste breath in trying to persuade me. If I knew that the very document I seek was in that safe I would not use that combination."

"Then there is a particular paper you want?" she cried quickly.

"Yes. I am foolish perhaps to have told you, but there is a particular paper I want. Now, may I ask, at the risk of seeming discourteous, if you will not leave me? I have much work to do, and I wish to have it finished by the time Mr. Walters returns."

She studied him, controlling herself with difficulty. "You are a very daring young man, Mr. Lane. You don't hesitate to anger me, and yet you know that if I were to let it be known that you were masquerading under a false name, you would be thrown out of this house and would lose your chance in the fight against Jim Walters."

"Yes," he admitted coolly, "I know that."

She was manifestly puzzled by his unconcern. "Perhaps you are thinking he won't know who you are even if he knows your name. That wouldn't make any difference to him."

"I am sure of that. And yet, sure as I am of it, I am greatly minded to tell him who I am and why I am in his employ."

She was completely taken aback at this, and something like fear began to creep over her. What was the meaning of his coolness and of the easy smile, which to her was inscrutable? She had thought she held him in the hollow of her hand, and he seemed to be laughing at her. She made up her mind that he must be her friend and work with her at any cost. She always had her woman's charm to fall back on; and her experience had been that she could bring any man to her feet if she seriously set out to do so.

She forced herself to smile. "You are too strong for me, Mr. Street. Let us be friends on your own terms." She thrust the paper into her bosom and held out her hand to him.

HE could hardly refuse to take her hand, though he did so reluctantly. He was conscious of its soft pressure and was affected by it, much to his annoyance. She was a seductively beautiful woman, but he always had in mind the pure, virginal charm of Beryl. He dropped her hand, although he knew by the way it lingered in his that he might have held it longer.

"There are no terms," he said. "Just let us be friends."

Her waist, after the prevailing mode, was cut low—lower than necessary perhaps—so that he could see her snowy bosom rise and fall under the stress of emotion; but whether the emotion was real or affected he could not tell. She gave him an appealing glance and then turned and walked in silence to the door. At the door she stopped and looked back. "Won't you promise me," she asked humbly, "not to reveal yourself to Jim, please?"

"I won't do it today, at any rate," he answered.

"Why do it at all?" she asked in a low voice. "I won't ask you again to help me. I—I want to be friends with you. I—I want to see you occasionally. I need someone in my life that I can trust. And you are so strong!"

"I can't promise anything," he responded, moved in spite of himself by the slight quaver in her voice. "I will let you know before I do it."

"Thank you!" she murmured gratefully, and closed the door behind her.

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VI

EVERETT Lane returned to his work, much troubled by his interview. He knew Jim Walters was hard and ruthless in his dealings with men, and he was convinced from his father's experience that he would stop at nothing to gain his ends. So it was easy to believe that he had been to his young and beautiful wife all that she had accused him of being. The fact that she had shown herself to be possessed of a furious temper, and that she had proved herself ready to go to any lengths to accomplish her purpose did not affect him greatly. Had he not, himself, been prepared to go very far indeed to punish the man who had ruined his father.

She *was* very beautiful, and moreover she had acknowledged herself beaten. He was too young not to be affected by these facts. On the other hand, there was Beryl, the most winsome, lovable girl he had ever seen; and, also, there was his present conviction that his father would never approve of anything dishonorable done in his name.

As will be seen, he was not consulting reason, but emotion, which more often than is realized, is used as a substitute. He felt more kindly disposed toward Mrs. Walters, he felt kindly disposed toward Jim Walters, and he felt, oh, very, very kindly disposed toward Beryl. No wonder he was disturbed in mind!

And he remained disturbed until Beryl came into the work-room with her father, a couple of hours later. The sight of her dimpled smiles and the music of her fresh, young voice brightened everything and clarified his thoughts. That is he forgot everything else and eyed her eagerly.

"Mr. Street," she cried gaily, "you are not to work any more today. You are to play tennis with me. That is you are to teach me, for I know you play well. Now don't you?"

"Why, yes, Miss Beryl, I play a pretty good game," he admitted, and looked at her father.

Grim Jim Walters smiled jovially. "I told you she was the real boss here," he said. "You might as well understand that you take your orders from her just as I do."

Lane pushed his chair back with great alacrity. "I'm not quite through yet, but I can finish this evening. Those papers on your desk are ready, Mr. Walters."

The young man had always looked upon teaching any game as a great bore, but he discovered now that teaching the nice points of tennis was as delightful a thing as could be done. Beryl had changed into her tennis clothes, making, so Lane thought, the most attractive picture he had ever looked at. Then she was so eager and active and graceful that he was sure he had never seen a dancer on the stage to compare with her. Added to that her exclamations of chagrin over a bad play and her cries of delight over a good one were so sweetly musical that they put to shame the best singers he had ever heard. In other words he judged Beryl from his heart and found her perfection.

How could he work to do her father injury! Jim Walters might be the most ruthless buccaneer of finance; he was still the father of Beryl. As for Beryl, either she was a finished actress or she really found great pleasure in his society.

Josephus Marble had been very kind to him; and when their plans had been made for the undoing of Jim Walters, nothing had seemed more just. To fight him with his own illegal, brutal methods had had something of divine justice in it. To injure the father of Beryl for so paltry and unworthy a motive as revenge seemed little less than despicable. So Lane decided that the most honorable way out for him was to tell Marble frankly how he felt and how he had decided, and then to confess his deception to Walters without implicating Marble.

Having reached this decision, which he did while standing very close to Beryl to show her how to hold her racquet for a difficult return, he felt quite at peace with himself, and enjoyed the game more than ever.

Dinner was not the gay meal it had been the day before, because Mrs. Walters was there. She was very vivacious and pleasant, however, to the manifest surprise of Walters and Beryl, and on the whole it passed off agreeably. Later they all retired to the music room, but when Lane found that Mrs. Walters evidently intended to remain there, he excused himself on the plea of finishing his work, and went to the work-room.

Walters presently followed him, and after busying himself for a while, turned to his secretary. "You've made a hit with Mrs. Walters, Street. She doesn't usually honor us with her company."

"I suppose I ought to feel flattered."

"Don't you?"

"No. Last evening was one of the pleasantest I ever spent. This wasn't."

"You enjoyed your game of tennis, didn't you?" Walters demanded.

"Very much," answered Lane, wondering what was coming next.

"I thought so. I was watching you from a window. Don't be fool enough to fall in love with Beryl, Street."

For a few moments the young man was speechless; then with the boldness that was natural to him, answered with flushed face but chin out, "I have been just that much of a fool, Mr. Walters; and if I had the least hope that she would love me, nothing you could say would make any difference. My work is finished. If you wish I will leave your house and your employ now."

Walters stared at him truculently for a moment, then broke into a laugh. "You can't have her, Street, but I like your spirit. No, you needn't leave either house or office. I want somebody like you about me. But you'll be wasting your time if you think you can get her to do anything I don't want her to."

Lane arranged his finished work on the big desk before he answered. "All right, Mr. Walters; but I may as well tell you that I'm not afraid of you, but only of myself. I know I'm not half good enough for her. Good night!" And he walked half angry, out of the room, followed by the grim chuckle of his employer.

HE couldn't understand Walters in the least. If he had been true to his conception of him, he would have sent him adrift in an outburst of fury. And instead he had only laughed. Then a terrible thought flashed into his mind. Perhaps Beryl was already in love with someone else!

By all rules he should have lain awake thinking over his various problems, but he was too healthy for that. He slept like a child. He was up early in the morning, and after a bath and shave and rather unusual attention to his toilet went downstairs.

The fact was that he hoped to find Beryl either in the house or grounds. It didn't seem to him that a girl like her would be wasting time in bed on such a beautiful morning.

He went to the music-room but found only a servant there. Inquiring about Beryl, he was told she was not down yet but that Mr. Walters was in the library.

As he didn't wish to see his employer just then he went along the hall quietly, intending to pass out by a side door into the garden. Just as he was turning toward the door, however, Mr. Walters burst from the library, his face white and his eyes wide with excitement.

"Street! Street!" he cried hoarsely as his eyes fell on him.

"Yes, sir."

"I've been robbed! My safe has been opened!"

(To be Continued)

Shame's Auction Block

(Continued from Page 24)

Head averted, I struggled to free myself from his arm.

"You're only saying that because you pity me!"

He drew me still closer. I could feel his hot breath on my cheek.

"Look into my eyes—look into my heart! Then, repeat that if you can—if you dare!"

I felt the same, hypnotic power that had swayed me when Gerald Paine's eyes had bored into mine; only this time there was a difference,—a power to lift up, rather than drag down. I looked deep into his eyes. And there, with woman's inherent intuition, I read the truth.

"Bob!"

My bare arms stole around his neck, my lips upturned to receive his kisses.

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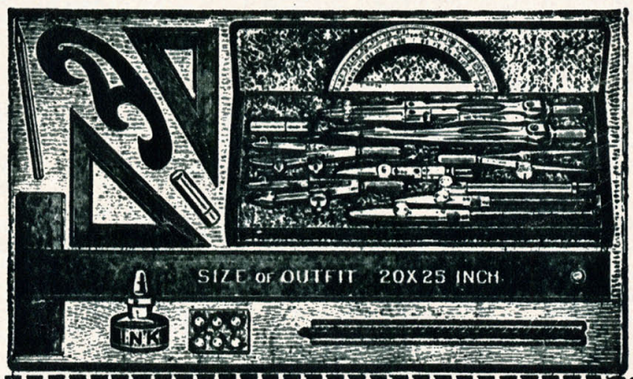

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